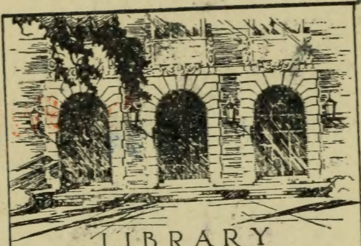


LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
289.7
W38c

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

JUN 11 1956

CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES OF ILLINOIS

1829 - 1929

R

STUDIES IN ANABAPTIST AND MENNONITE HISTORY

TWO CENTURIES OF AMERICAN MENNONITE LITERATURE, 1727-1928*
By *Harold S. Bender*

THE HUTTERIAN BRETHREN, 1528-1928*
By *John Horsch*

CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES OF ILLINOIS*
By *Harry F. Weber*

PACIFISM AMONG THE MENNONITES, AMISH MENNONITES, AND SCHWENKFELDERS OF PENNSYLVANIA TO 1783
By *Wilbur J. Bender*

LIFE AND LETTERS OF CONRAD GREBEL
By *Harold S. Bender, Ernst Correll,* and *Edward Yoder*

Other volumes to be arranged.

---

* Now published.

Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History

Edited by
Harold S. Bender, B. D. (Garrett), Th. M., M. A. (Princeton)
NST Correll, Ph. D. (Munich) Silas Hertzler, Ph. D. (Yale)
Edward Yoder, Ph. D. (Pennsylvania)

NO. 3

Centennial History of the Mennonites of Illinois

1829-1929

Published by
The Mennonite Historical Society
Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana

Press of the
Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania

1931

COPYRIGHT 1931
By THE MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, U. S. A.

Printed in United States of America

Centennial History of The Mennonites of Illinois
1829---1929

By HARRY F. WEBER, PH. D.

Published by
The Mennonite Historical Society
Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana

Press of the
Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania

1931

Dedicated to

BISHOP JOSEPH S. SHOEMAKER

Senior bishop in the Illinois Mennonite Conference, for almost forty years a faithful minister of the Gospel of Christ, and a beloved leader in the activities of the Mennonite Church.

W 38c

FOREWORD

In the year 1923 Harry Weber, a member of the Science Ridge Mennonite Church at Sterling, Illinois, presented to the Illinois Mennonite conference the plan of preparing a history of the Mennonites of Illinois. The conference, which met at Fisher, Illinois, September 11 and 12 of that year expressed itself in favor of the plan and appointed a committee of three brethren, namely, C. F. Derstine, Simon Litwiller, and S. M. Kanagy as an historical committee to coöperate with Brother Weber in securing data and in studying the project. This committee was also to present the proposition to the various congregations in the state and report at the next conference. The conference of the following year, which was held near Flanagan, Illinois, August 26 and 27, 1924, officially endorsed the history, asked all the congregations to support the undertaking, and authorized the Historical Committee to continue to coöperate with Brother Weber until the work should be completed. After the removal of C. F. Derstine from the state, H. R. Schertz was appointed in his place as chairman of the committee. The manuscript was completed and submitted to the committee for consideration at the conference held near Freeport, June, 1928. The committee reported the completion of the work and recommended its publication. The conference empowered the committee to take action in coöperation with the Historical Committee of the General Conference in arranging for the publication of the history and its distribution and sale, with the promise that the conference would finance the work.

After some investigation, the committee negotiated with the Mennonite Historical Society of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, for the editing and publication of the

791790

book, which was to appear as a volume in the series of historical books published by the Society, entitled *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History.* Harold S. Bender of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, was appointed to edit the book.

The committee also had the manuscript submitted to various persons competent to judge its value and make suggestions for improvement where necessary. Several members of the Historical Committee of General Conference, including John Horsch, S. F. Coffman and Harold S. Bender, carefully read the manuscript and made some suggestions for improvement at various places. J. S. Shoemaker also read the manuscript. Representatives of the other Mennonite conferences of Illinois have read the manuscript as far as it deals with their conferences.

We feel that the author, Brother Harry F. Weber, has produced a valuable work and that he deserves the thanks and appreciation of the Illinois Conference for his efforts. By means of his work much historical information of value has been preserved which would otherwise have been lost. By becoming acquainted with the life and work of our church in the past our loyalty and devotion to the church and its faith and work to-day are increased. We learn to appreciate our heritage better and can profit by the failures as well as the successes of the past. May the book prove to be an inspiration and a help to all, old and young. May it serve to re-create the memories of the past for our older generation and may it challenge our youth to more effective service in the cause of Christ for the future.

Historical Committee of the Illinois Mennonite Conference:

Henry R. Schertz,
Simon M. Kanagy,
Simon Litwiller.

EDITORS' PREFACE

The field of regional American Mennonite history has not yet been developed, although it is a rich field, one which will amply repay those who have the equipment, the patience, and the industry to exploit it. The Mennonite Historical Society of Goshen College presents as the first regional history of American Mennonitism Dr. Harry F. Weber's *Centennial History of the Mennonites of Illinois,* 1829-1929. The book forms number three of the Society's series, *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History.*

The author, Harry Franklin Weber, Ph. D., a graduate of Goshen College, Witmarsum Theological Seminary and Hartford Theological Seminary, himself a Mennonite of Illinois, pursued his study and research in Illinois Mennonite History for over five years. His painstaking, conscientious industry has produced a comprehensive work of cyclopedic character, which includes in addition to material of a general nature, a specific history of each Mennonite congregation and institution which has ever been established in the great prairie state of Illinois. To a large extent the volume is a compilation of local history. The more general religious and sociological interpretation is left for others, since Illinois presents few peculiar characteristics which are different from those of American Mennonites as a whole. The author's material was gleaned chiefly from primary sources, such as personal interviews and questionnaires and is thoroughly reliable.

In his endeavor to present a fair, sympathetic history of the nine groups of Mennonites within the state, Dr. Weber has been eminently successful. He was fortunate to have the coöperation of historically-minded persons in all the groups, particularly in the (old) Mennonite Conference and the Defenseless Conference, and the Central

Conference. While the work has been directly sponsored by the Illinois (old) Mennonite Conference, the Defenseless Conference also officially supported Dr. Weber's work and instructed its Publication Board to coöperate with him. Part of the section of the volume giving the history of this conference was written by historians of the conference.

The preparation of the volume was substantially completed in 1926, but due to various delays it did not reach publication until five years later. The author was not able, however, due to pressing duties in connection with his college teaching in eastern Pennsylvania, to rewrite the book so as to bring it up to date, much as he desired to do so. The editors have inserted some new material, in order to bring the history down to approximately 1929.

The volume as published has been modified somewhat from its original form, yet the original content, point of view, and style of the book as it left the author's hand has been to a very large extent preserved. With these changes, the book represents the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy which was conferred upon the author by Hartford Theological Seminary in 1926.

The Illinois Mennonite Conference deserves commendation for the warm and effective way in which it has supported the preparation and publication of this volume from the beginning. The Historical Committee of the Conference has done much to aid the author directly and by enlisting the coöperation of the individual congregations in the conference. Furthermore, and not least, the conference has assumed the entire financial responsibility for the publication of the book. It was alone by this generous underwriting that the publication of the volume was made possible. We congratulate the Illinois Conference on its historical-mindedness, and hope that its vigorous example will be followed by other Mennonite conferences.

THE EDITORS.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Having written the "History of the American Mennonites of Illinois" as my Master's thesis, it seemed a logical step to proceed with a history of all the Mennonites of Illinois. In this I was encouraged by a number of friends and also by satisfactory institutional arrangements for graduate study. My original purpose was to write a complete, reliable, and impartial history of the Mennonites located in this geographical area. In spite of the many different branches I expected to give a composite history showing all interrelations and treating each branch from an internal and external point of view. I have been disillusioned in regard to the unity of the subject. The branches have separated themselves into mutually exclusive groups which make a systematic and unified treatment difficult. To treat each as an individual unit would be encyclopedic. To simply compile data would make the result no more than a source book. I must admit that in its final form my work has not gone much beyond that stage.

Theoretically, the arrangement of the book is chronological. This brought a number of problems, since the three lines of Mennonites—Amish, Main Line, and Russian—in many instances call for treatment at the same time. Book I is devoted to the general historical introduction, the identification of the various branches and the story of the early settlements of the Amish and Mennonites in Illinois. Book II is devoted exclusively to the treatment of the two groups which united to form the present Illinois Mennonite Conference, namely, the Main Line Mennonites and the Amish Mennonites. Books III and IV are devoted to the two other major groups, the Defenceless Mennonites and the Central

Conference of Mennonites. Book V contains the history of the smaller groups.

In order to get the coöperation and sympathy of the various groups the matter of a history was placed before them. Several branches took official action favoring the project, in particular the Illinois (old) Mennonite Conference. Some committees were appointed. Of these the most active was the committee of the Conference just named. An elaborate questionnaire composed of 308 inquiries was printed and sent to an appointed representative in each congregation for gathering the local history. About one fourth responded better than one would have a right to ask, but some others never lifted a pencil. It had not been my original purpose to rely on such correspondence for the data but merely to use it preliminary to personal research. I visited all the churches of the state and gathered a trunkful of notes. I attempted to get all the printed and unprinted source material, such as county histories, secretary books, conference minutes, files of church papers, etc., into my possession for temporary use. In many cases I found the owners very reluctant to lend material; nor could I blame them since thoughtless predecessors had been very inconsiderate. On the other hand several were very kind in loaning their material for as long as it was needed. There were no books from which I could draw directly. The few general Mennonite histories contained not more than a dozen pages concerning this field. However the viewpoints and personal assistance given by their authors were of great value and were highly appreciated.

The disappointments in connection with this work were manifold. Some individuals, from whom I hoped to receive assistance, did not respond even to a third or fourth letter. Likewise whole churches and even branches were indifferent. The idea of one history for all the branches was not popular. In addition, the financial burden involved in the gathering of material, which fell to me alone, was much heavier than I had anticipated.

Yet I am not sorry that I undertook the work. The visiting from place to place was very pleasant. It gave me a perspective of modern Mennonitism. I profited much by the contacts formed and retain many pleasant memories.

Now that the work is completed, imperfect as it is, I am made to wonder what my motive was in writing it. Perhaps it was curiosity for information and investigation, a general interest in history, a desire to rescue Mennonite data which was being rapidly forgotten, a sense of duty to the church in which I was reared, or an ideal of justice in regards to the credit the Mennonite Church should be given in proportion to the other denominations. My attitude when starting can be gathered from the "Introductory Note" of the questionnaire which I prepared at the beginning of the work. A quotation follows:

"A few reasons why such a history should be undertaken are: First, we dare not forget our fathers or we will soon forget the 'Faith of our Fathers.' Second, people who neglect to respect their past are apt to make no program for the future. Third, our fathers learned some very valuable lessons which our generation cannot afford to overlook. Fourth, much inspiration can be received from the record of those who planted their faith here. Fifth, such a record would also be very interesting. Sixth, such a history must soon be made or many important facts will be forever lost. Seventh, the children are given secular history in the public schools to make them patriotic citizens of the state and nation; likewise the church must place her history before her children to keep them faithful and loyal to the church."

I wish I were able to definitely state a thesis that I had set out to prove. I might have aimed to demonstrate the rightness or wrongness of Mennonitism; to state causes of the many divisions; to illustrate the effects of emphasis upon special items of faith and practise. I believe I have approached nearest the theme of showing the development of a pioneer church from a single monthly service to a stage of comparatively extensive activity in various lines of religious endeavor. This slow but spontaneous development, coming in the face of stubborn resistance, seldom promoted officially, and sponsored by but few leaders, will make an interesting and inspiring problem for some future student of Mennonite History.

It is impossible to mention the names of all those friends who have assisted in gathering information, loaning source material, giving suggestions, and other forms of helpfulness, so at the risk of being discourteous to some, I will mention none. However I am very grateful to all for their many favors. Names have been attached at proper places throughout the context where credit is due. In addition to those who aided in the collection of material, I am especially indebted to S. F. Coffman of Vineland, Ontario, J. S. Shoemaker of Freeport, Illinois, John Horsch of Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Harold S. Bender of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, who carefully read the entire manuscript before publication, and whose many useful suggestions have greatly enhanced the value of the book. Professor Bender rendered valuable service by editing the entire manuscript and seeing it through the press. At his suggestion a considerable rearrangement of the materials was made, and a few chapters were partly rewritten by him. In no way however are any of my good friends who have aided so much in the production of the book in its present form responsible for the errors or shortcomings which may appear in it.

Albright College, May, 1929. Harry F. Weber.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword vii
Editors' Preface ix
Author's Preface xi
Table of Contents xv

Book I. The Coming of the Mennonites to Illinois

Part I. Historical Introduction

apter
I. General Mennonite History 3
II. The Mennonites and Other Denominations 22
III. The Amish Wing 31
IV. The Main Line of Mennonites 42
V. The Russian Wing 53
VI. Mennonite Principles 59

Part II. Early Settlements in Illinois

VII. The State of Illinois 67
VIII. The Creek Settlements of the Amish: First Period 1829-1852 76
IX. The Mennonites Come to Illinois: First Period 1833-1852 92
X. The Second Period of Settlement: 1852-1866 101

Book II. The Illinois Mennonite Conference

Part I. The Mennonite Congregations

XI. The Illinois District Mennonite Conference 113
XII. The Amish and the Mennonites 131
XIII. The Union Congregation near Washington 134
XIV. The Freeport Congregation 142
XV. The Science Ridge Congregation near Sterling 151
XVI. The Morrison Congregation 162
XVII. The Cullom Congregation 167
VIII. Extinct Congregations: Gardner and Chicago 174

Part II. The Amish-Mennonite Congregations

XIX. The Amish General Conferences 179
XX. The Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference 187
XXI. The Metamora and Harmony Congregations 198
XXII. The Roanoke Congregation 203
XIII. The Goodfield Congregation 211
XIV. The Pleasant Grove Congregation near Tremont 216
XXV. The Willow Springs Congregation near Tiskilwa 222
XVI. The Hopedale Congregation 237
XVII. The Waldo Congregation near Flanagan 244
VIII. The East Bend Congregation near Fisher 253

Part III. Aggressive Christian Work

XIX. The *Herald of Truth* published in Chicago 259
XXX. Saving Evangelism 264

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter
XXXI. The Beginning of (old) Mennonite Missions
XXXII. The Home Mission in Chicago
XXXIII. The Twenty-sixth Street Mission in Chicago
XXXIV. The Illinois District Mission Board and New Missionary Activities
Illinois Mission Board, Garden Street Mission at Peoria, Pleasant Hill Rural Mission, Woman's Missionary Society, Mennonite Home for the Aged at Eureka.
XXXV. The Conference Merger

Book III. The Defenseless Mennonites

XXXVI. The Work of Henry Egly
XXXVII. The Salem Congregation near Gridley
XXXVIII. The Congregation near Groveland
XXXIX. The Annual Church Conference and District S. S. Convention
XL. The Foreign Missionary Work
XLI. The Salem Orphanage near Flanagan
XLII. The Mennonite Sanitarium and Training School at Bloomington
XLIII. The Mennonite Old People's Home of Meadows, Illinois
XLIV. The Church Publications
XLV. The Salem Gospel Mission
XLVI. The Brotherhood Aid Association
XLVII. The Missionary Church Association

Book IV. The Central Conference of Mennonites

XLVIII. The Yoder Church, the Mother Church
XLIX. Joseph Stuckey, the Church Father
L. The Illinois Congregations
LI. Conference Formation—Peter Schantz
LII. The Conference Activities
LIII. The Home Mission Work
LIV. The Coöperative Activities

Book V. Smaller Groups

LV. The Old Order Amish. The Arthur Settlement
LVI. The Reformed Mennonites. The Sterling Congregation
LVII. The Conservative Amish. The Sleeping Preacher Group
LVIII. The General Conference of Mennonites
The Summerfield Congregation, the Formation of the General Conference, The Chicago Mission
LIX. The Mennonites from Russia
Defenseless Mennonite Brethren, Brighton Mission Chapel, The Krimmer Brueder, the Work in Chicago.
Conclusion
Appendix I. The Earliest Amish Illinois Settlers
Appendix II. Biographies of Illinois Ministers
Chronology
Bibliography
List of Maps, Tables and Illustrations
Index

BOOK I

THE COMING OF THE MENNONITES TO ILLINOIS

Part I

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

GENERAL MENNONITE HISTORY[1]

It is a long distance, both chronologically and geographically, from Christ in Palestine to the Mennonites in Illinois. Christ did His teaching in the first century about 29 A. D., and the Mennonites did not come to Illinois until 1829, an extent in time of eighteen centuries. Palestine was one of the Oriental countries peopled with Semites, while Illinois is one of the great commonwealths of the New World, and its Mennonites, a people of the Teutonic race.

The story of Christianity is the story of a great and intricate historical movement which is growing each year more intricate. Of course Christ is the acknowledged spiritual leader and head of the Mennonite denomination. For that reason, no doubt, some of its adherents would like to trace its organic continuity back to the Apostles. When the Christian Faith had won its place in the Roman Empire, it was made the religion of the state. From that point it developed into a great and powerful institution, a Catholic Church with two branches, Greek and Roman. But as its glory increased, its spirituality declined. Paralleling the history of the Catholic Church were individuals and small groups that championed "the simple faith." It is to such sects as the Montanists, the

---

[1] This summary history of the Mennonites has been gleaned for the most part from C. Henry Smith's *The Mennonites,* which is the best American authority.

Cathari, and the Waldenses that the Mennonites have looked for continuity. These were, no doubt, spiritual forerunners, but the actual Mennonite movement began with the Anabaptists, one of the four major groups of the Reformation of the 16th century. The Roman Catholic Church had dominated the western Christian world for twelve centuries, and so many abuses had crept in that good people throughout Europe were desirous of reform. Luther touched off the religious revolt by posting his 95 "theses" on the church door in Wittenberg in 1517 A. D. Zwingli began a similar movement at Zurich in Switzerland in 1521. A general spirit of reform and revolt spread over central Europe.

The name Anabaptist came to be applied to nearly all those Reformation parties who were not classed with either the Lutheran or Reformed movements. It included a diversity of peoples and ideas, varying from the peaceful radicals to whom the name Anabaptist more properly applies, to the extreme fanatics who were political and social rather than religious protestants.

The peaceful radicals first appeared in 1523-25 in Zurich, Switzerland, where Zwingli was developing his "Reformed Church." A number of Zwingli's original supporters felt that he had not carried his reforms far enough. While Zwingli had made a distinct break with the Papacy, he had not at that time departed very far from some of the old customs, ceremonies, and doctrines.

The practice of baptizing infants, which Zwingli retained, became the center of dispute. Zwingli met his opponents in public debate. These opponents contended that a definite confession of faith should precede baptism, thus advocating believer's or adult baptism. Several discussions were held, but the contending parties instead of becoming more united thereby were the more widely separated. The public disputation was held in January, 1525.

Immediately thereafter those who were dissatisfied with Zwingli withdrew and formed an independent brotherhood, the third wing of the Protestant Reformation. Hence January, 1525 may be considered as the date of the origin of the Mennonite group. Seeing that reconciliation was impossible, Zwingli, since he had the civil authorities supporting him, resolved to use force where argument was of no avail. Thus began a succession of persecutions which this band and its followers had to undergo for many generations to come.

The leaders of this new movement, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and William Reublin, were men of excellent character. Grebel was the son of a prominent patrician who was a member of the Zurich Council. Though not a priest, he had received a good humanistic education in the Universities of Vienna and Paris. At first he had been a warm supporter of Zwingli, who spoke well of him. Manz, the son of a canon of the Zurich Cathedral, was also a thorough scholar. Blaurock, formerly a monk at Chur, was called "second Paul" on account of his fiery preaching. Reublin, who had been a priest at Basel and later near Zurich, was an excellent student of the Bible. These men and others met at a private home in Zurich in January 1525, where Grebel baptized Blaurock, who in turn baptized a number of others. They designated themselves as "Brethren," but their enemies called them "Anabaptists," which means rebaptizers, because they rebaptized all their converts who already had been baptized as infants.

However, the act of rebaptizing was only incidental to their more fundamental doctrine of believer's baptism. To this were added other principles just as fundamental. They advocated the absolute separation of church and state. This was far in advance of their day. Although both Luther and Zwingli had initiated new churches, their new foundations were organized as state churches. The Anabaptists contended that the government had no jurisdiction in matters of religion. The logical consequence of this principle was another just as far ahead of its time: religious toleration. These Anabaptists made the New Testament the basis of their faith. Love was to be the ruling element. This teaching found expression in the well-known doctrine of the Mennonites called "Non-Resistance." It meant absolute refusal to use force in any form even in war. Church members must not hold office, because that would necessitate the use of force. Taking the oath was prohibited by scripture and was objectionable because it attempted to coerce the conscience. Another major principle was the insistence on holy living and the use of discipline to maintain the purity of the church as well as personal holiness.

Zwingli persuaded the Zurich Council to pass mandate after mandate with the aim of crushing the new movement. Not only the Anabaptists but also those who offered them any assistance were threatened with life imprisonment and ultimately death by drowning. The leaders remained loyal to their new faith, proving their convictions by facing death. Felix Manz was the first of the leaders to become a martyr to the cause. He was drowned by decree of the Council, January 5, 1527. Conrad Grebel died in prison from the plague in 1526. In spite of the Council's efforts, the movement made headway. However, the Zurich persecution forced the leaders to scatter all over Switzerland and Southern Germany, where the masses eagerly and readily accepted their simple message.

The early group of leaders were soon killed off. If these strong chiefs had been permitted to live as did Luther and Zwingli, it is interesting to conjecture the probable growth and establishment of the body. As it was, the group showed great vitality in being able not only to survive the death of its leaders and the general persecutions, but even to extend its influence. A new leadership arose, including among other pastors, Hans Denck, Hans Langenmantel, Martin Weniger, Balthasar Hubmaier, Michael Sattler and Pilgram Marbeck. In less than a decade the movement had spread all over "the Germanies," that is, Austria, Alsace-Lorraine, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and most of the three hundred independent political units of Germany proper. It is probable however that the movement in the Netherlands and North Germany arose independently of the Swiss movement. The church at Augsburg, Germany, had eleven hundred members as early as 1527. Thousands were drawn to the new movement. The Swiss authorities became so alarmed by its spread that on August 13, 1527, a confederated council of Swiss cantons composed of Bern, Basel, Schaffhausen, Appenzell, St. Gall and Chur, was called to discuss measures for checking the growth of Anabaptism.

In contrast, on August 20, 1527, at Augsburg, a conference of all the Anabaptist leaders of South Germany, Moravia, and Switzerland, met to formulate and unify the various views. This conference has been named the "Martyr's Synod," because in a few years most of those who attended met a martyr's death. Thus by the end of the first decade (1535), the second group of leadership had been removed.

During this time, early in 1527, the first known confession of faith, "A Brotherly Union of the Children of God," was drawn up at Schleitheim, near Schaffhausen, in South Germany. It is thought to have been largely the work of Michael Sattler. The following summary is taken from C. Henry Smith's *Mennonites of America* (1909), pp. 42f.

(1) "Baptism shall be administered to all who are taught repentance and a change of life, and truly believe

in the forgiveness of their sins through Jesus Christ, and are willing to walk in newness of life; all those shall be baptized when they desire it and ask it by the decision of their own minds, which excludes all infant baptism according to the Scriptures and the practice of the Apostles."

(2) "The Ban or Excommunication shall be practiced with all those who have given themselves to the Lord to follow His commandments, are baptized, and call themselves brethren and sisters and yet stumble and fall into sin, or are unexpectedly overtaken; these after admonition according to Matthew 18, if they do not repent, shall be excommunicated."

(3) "All who wish to break 'one bread' in remembrance of the broken body of Christ, and drink 'one cup' in remembrance of His shed blood, shall be united by baptism into one body, which is the congregation of God and of which Christ is the head."

(4) "The Christian must be separated from all the evil and wickedness that Satan has planted into this world. According to II Cor. 6:17, 18: 'We shall come out from among them and be separate,' separate from all Papistic works and services, meetings and church-goings, drinking-houses and other things which the world highly esteems."

(5) "The minister shall, according to the teaching of Paul, be of good report of them that are without. He shall teach, exhort, and help all the members to advance in their spiritual life. When he has need, he shall be aided by the congregations which chose him to do his work. If he should be driven away, or imprisoned, or killed, another minister shall at once be put into his place."

(6) "The worldly governments of the land are to use the sword, but in the perfect congregation of Christ excommunication is used, by which no one suffers violence to the body. Neither is it the Christian's work to have part in civil government, because the rulings of govern-

ment are according to the flesh, but the government of Christ is according to the Spirit. The weapons of the world are carnal, but the weapons of the Christian are spiritual, to the overcoming of the world and of Satan."

(7) "Christ, who taught the law in perfection, forbade His disciples all oaths, whether true or false. By this we understand that all swearing is forbidden."[2]

These tenets or principles, quite similar to present-day Mennonite beliefs, show that this group was a band of simple, evangelical, peace-loving people. Their principles, however, could not fail to be the source of trouble with the established church. Of course not all who were called Anabaptists advocated this particular set of beliefs, since all groups that rejected infant baptism were called "Anabaptists," even though holding divergent principles. The large majority of the Anabaptists, however, were simple, frugal people of stable character and sound principles.

There was no organic relation between these peace-loving "Brethren" and the revolutionary Anabaptists such as Thomas Münzer or the Münsterites who attempted in 1533-35 to set up the Kingdom of Christ by force in the city of Münster in North Germany. The two years' reign of terror of the Münsterites is a long and horrible story. Eventually the city was recaptured. Those who did not perish in fighting were executed.

The most unfortunate aftermath of the Münster tragedy was that the characteristics of these fanatics were bestowed by popular superstition upon all Anabaptists. The name became a synonym for violence, outrage, rebellion, sensuality and vice. On this account hundreds of innocent Anabaptists were made to suffer. Soon after 1535, however, the fanatical groups disappeared, and only the nonresistants survived. These were scattered, disorganized, despised and discouraged. .It was an immense task to revive these unfortunate but godly people. Into this trying situation came a new group of leaders, among whom were Obbe and Dirk Philips, Leonhard Bouwens and Menno Simons in the North, and Pilgram Marbeck and Jacob Hutter in the South.

---

[2] See Chapter VI for a more complete discussion of Mennonite principles.

Obbe Philips was baptized, chosen and ordained as bishop about 1533 by the disciples sent by Jan Matthys to Friesland. Thus Obbe forms a connecting link with that fanatic group, but he frowned upon all their extremes. He in turn ordained his brother Dirk and Menno Simons in 1536, as well as others. For some unknown reason Obbe later came to feel that the whole movement was a mistake. After he renounced his office, he begged Dirk and Menno to do likewise, but they refused. At this point Obbe parted company with the Anabaptists and is heard of no more. He is remembered for his "Confession," which became a popular writing among the Anabaptists.

Dirk Philips is thought to have been master of several languages. It is not certain that he ever attended a university, but he must have given himself a very practical and generous education. His zeal for the cause and his popular eloquence were as great as that of Menno Simons, and he far outshone the latter in learning and familiarity with classical letters. His nature was too well balanced to be moved by fanaticism. All his known writings have been preserved, and fortunately, for they are a treasure house. The most outstanding is the "Enchiridon." It is still used by the Amish. Surviving Menno seven years, he died in 1568. Although it is true that he labored as hard, wrote as well, and was more stable in his opinions than Menno, Dirk's stubbornness and harshness incapacitated him for wise and broadminded leadership, both during Menno's life and after his death. Menno and Dirk devoted most of their labors to East Friesland and the North German regions as far east as Riga.

Leonhard Bouwens, a co-laborer, became the great apostle to West Friesland and to Holland in general, where in a few years he is said to have baptized ten thousand people.

Menno Simons was born in 1496 at Witmarsum, Friesland (Netherlands). Having been educated for the church, he became a priest in a parish near his birthplace. Even after he had served in that capacity for three years he had never read the Bible. But one day during mass a horrible doubt about the entire procedure came over him. He struggled against it. Not being able to cast it off, he began to read the Bible and Luther's writings. Aroused by the execution of an Anabaptist in 1531, he became concerned with the problem of infant baptism but found no satisfactory solution among the more popular works on Protestantism. He remained inactive for a time, but when his brother and 300 other Anabaptists were killed near his home, he no longer hesitated.

For conscience' sake, giving up his life of ease, he publicly renounced his mother church in January, 1536, and going to the neighboring province of Groningen, cast his lot with the despised band of Anabaptists. He was soon recognized as a leader and urged to take up the ministry, being ordained in 1536. Thus he became the leader of the better type of Anabaptists, who, abhorring the designation of Anabaptists because of the vileness it implied, simply called themselves "Brethren." Later, they adopted the name "Doopsgezinden." While other Protestants were emphasizing creed, this group centered its principles in life itself.

Menno Simons was a consistent and thoroughgoing Biblical reformer. Historians of the present day are beginning to accord him his proper place. For a quarter of a century he lived and labored for the cause. His life after leaving the Catholic church was never a pleasant one. He was known as "the Arch-Heretic," but was the high priest of the quiet folk to whom he ministered. In 1542, a personal imperial edict was issued against him, in which a price was set upon his head. This made it necessary for him to keep on the move. From Groningen he went to Emden, then to Cologne. He was married and reared a family; however, only one daughter survived him. He wrote and debated much in defense of the faith. His complete works were published in the English language by John F. Funk at Elkhart, Indiana, in 1871.

The following extract from Menno's treatise on the New Birth expresses his position on certain religious principles:

"Behold, worthy reader, all those who are born of God with Christ, who thus conform their weak life to the Gospel, are thus converted, and . . . follow His commands, which He in plain words commanded us in the holy Scriptures, form the holy Christian church which has His promise; the true children of God, brothers and sisters of Christ; for they are born with Him of one Father, and of the new Eve, the pure, chaste bride. They are flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of His bone, the spiritual home of Israel, the spiritual city, Jerusalem, temple and Mount Zion, the spiritual ark of the Lord, in which are hidden the true bread of heaven, Christ Jesus and His blessed Word, the green, blossoming rod of faith, and the spiritual tables of stone, with the commands of the Lord written thereon; they are the spiritual seed of Abraham, children of the promise, confederates of the covenant of God, and partakers of the heavenly blessings.

"These regenerated have a spiritual King over them, who rules them by the unbroken scepter of His mouth; namely, with His Holy Spirit and Word. He clothes them with the garment of righteousness, of pure white silk; He refreshes them with the living water of His Holy

Spirit, and feeds them with the bread of life. His name is Christ Jesus. They are the children of peace, who have beaten their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and know of no war; and give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Isa. 2:4; Matt. 22:21). Their sword is the sword of the Spirit, which they hold in a good conscience through the Holy Ghost. Their marriage is that of one man and one woman according to the ordinance of God. Their kingdom is the kingdom of grace, here in hope, and after this in eternal life (Eph. 6:17; Matt. 19:5; 25:1).

"Their citizenship is in heaven; and they use the creatures below, such as eating, drinking, clothing, and dwelling with thanksgiving, and that to the necessary wants of their own lives, and to the free service of their neighbor, according to the Word of the Lord (Isa. 58:7). Their doctrine is the unadulterated Word of God, testified through Moses and the prophets, through Christ and the apostles, upon which they build their faith, and save their souls; and everything that is contrary thereto, they consider accursed. They use and administer their baptism on the confession of their faith, according to the command of the Lord, and the doctrines and usages of the apostles (Mark 16:16).

"The Lord's supper they celebrate in remembrance of the favors and death of their Lord, and in reminding one another of true and brotherly love.

"The ban extends to all the proud scorners, great and small, rich and poor, without any respect to person, who heard and obeyed the Word for a season, but have fallen off again, and in the house of the Lord, teach or live offensively, till they again sincerely repent.

"They sigh and lament daily over their poor, displeasing, evil flesh, over the manifold errors and faults of their weak lives. They war inwardly and outwardly without ceasing. They seek and call the Most High; fight and struggle against the devil, world and flesh during their lives, press on towards the prize of the high calling that they may obtain it. And they prove by their actions that they believe the Word of the Lord; that they know and have Christ in power; that they are born of God and have Him as their Father.

"Behold, worthy reader, as I said before, so I say again. These are the Christians who have the promise, and are assured by the Spirit of God, to whom are given and bestowed Christ Jesus, with all His merits, righteousness, intercessions, word, cross, suffering, flesh, blood, death, resurrection, kingdom, and all His possessions, and this all without merit; given out of pure grace from God. But what kind of doctrine, faith, life, regeneration, baptism, supper, ban and divine service, sectarian churches have, of whatever name; and what kind of reward is promised them in the Scriptures, I will let the reasonable meditate upon, with the aid of the Spirit and the word of the Lord." (Complete Works, Part I. pp 170-71).

Aside from the persecution from without, Menno had to contend with divisions in his own ranks. It is probably here that his leadership was best displayed. He did all in his power to conciliate the parties even to the extent of vacillating on the question of "the ban and avoidance" which was one of the serious issues that produced contention.

Strangely enough, he was permitted to die a natural death, which occurred January 31, 1561, at Wuestenfelde, in Holstein. He was buried in his own garden. The Thirty Years' War devastated that part of the country, so that no one knows just where his body rests.

Menno's followers were given all sorts of nicknames, such as "new-monks," "sacrament-spoilers," "child-soul murderers," "communists," "house-slippers," and "syrup-lickers." In 1544, the Countess Anne in West Friesland first used the term "Menist." After this, the Anabaptists of Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland were referred to frequently under this designation. They eventually adopted it for themselves. In English it became "Mennonites."

It would be interesting to note the development of Mennonitism throughout the various countries of Europe. But since that would diverge too far from the subject in hand, a few remarks will have to suffice. The attitude toward the Mennonites varied from semi-toleration in the Netherlands to extreme and bitter intolerance in Switzerland. About 1600 there was a great diminution of persecution in Holland, although full religious toleration was not given until 1795. In this country they were allowed the best opportunity to develop. Few were driven out. The Netherland Mennonites were able thus to give much assistance to their brethren who suffered so severely at the hands of other governments. However they were not free from contention within their own ranks. Flemish, Old Flemings, Waterlanders, Frisians, "Loose" Frisians, "Sonnists" and "Lammists" were some of the divisions that arose.

By drawing up articles as a basis of union, these Netherland branches furnished the majority of the Mennonite confessions of faith, some of which are in use at the present time. The most important of these was the one adopted at Dortrecht in 1632, containing 18 articles. It has become the most widely used by all groups and is the official confession of practically all the Mennonites of Illinois.

When Napoleon, at the end of the 18th century, did away with their special privileges, they did not attempt to recover them and ceased to be non-resistant. The Hollanders have become prosperous and in many cases wealthy. They have also become the most liberal Mennonite body in the world, being predominantly unitarian in theology.

During the eighteenth century the Holland Mennonites lost heavily in membership. In order to remedy this depletion, the first Mennonite school, the Theological Seminary of Amsterdam, was opened in 1735. At the present time the group in Holland consists of about one hundred and thirty congregations, with about 40,000 baptized members. The present church in Amsterdam numbers over six thousand baptized persons.

Switzerland, unlike Holland, drove almost all of her "Brethren" from the country. This weakened the group exceedingly. Hans Landis, the last martyr, was executed as late as 1614, but this by no means ended the persecution. Mennonites were still thrown into filthy prisons and their property was confiscated. They were still sent to the galleys. Religious toleration was not granted them until 1815. With all this external pressure, there was found opportunity for internal strife. In 1693 a quarrel of an intense nature arose in the Swiss Mennonite Churches, out of which grew the Amish branch of the church, which still exists.[8]

It will be impossible to devote much space to the history of the Mennonites in the various other countries of Europe: West Prussia, East Prussia, North Germany, East Friesland, the lower German Rhine, the lower Elbe, Holstein, South Germany, Moravia, Galicia, France, Alsace and Lorraine. When conditions became unbearable in one region, the Mennonites migrated to some province whither a more tolerant ruler had invited them. Frequently, by the time they were comfortably settled or had become prosperous, the attitude of the ruling power changed, and they had to move on. In Moravia, where the "Brethren" had adopted communism and were called "Hutterites," they enjoyed considerable freedom at first, but after a time troubles began, which continued until the group was almost exterminated. In the Palatinate, whither many Swiss Mennonites had come in the seventeenth century, religious and economic conditions became so oppressive that in the eighteenth century many of them left for Holland and America. Dutch refugees had early settled in Prussia, where they had comparative freedom until their special privileges were revoked by Frederick William I and his successors.

---

[8] See Chapters III, VIII.

Catherine the Great of Russia in 1783 invited colonists to settle upon her newly acquired lands in South Russia. The Mennonites being good farmers, she granted them special privileges to encourage them to come. The main privilege was exemption from military service. Several colonies were established by immigrants from Prussia, the most important being Chortitza and Molotschna. The Russian Mennonites became very prosperous. They used progressive methods of agriculture. Their organizations and institutions became firmly established, and their membership became larger than that of the other Mennonite communities of Europe. However, they were not without internal strife, several divisions having later arisen. Later rulers were not so lenient with them. The government revoked their military exemption in 1870. Soon after, in 1873, an extensive emigration to America began which continued for several years.[4] Those remaining there have found conditions under the Soviet government almost unbearable. For this reason emigration to the United States and Canada was renewed in 1921 and has continued to the present, although limited since 1925 to Canada.

The same reasons that caused some of the Mennonites to migrate to Russia, led others to come early to America. Persecutions, oppressions, restrictions, and unfortunate migrations from place to place made America loom up as "the promised land." With oppression and hatreds at their backs and pioneering hardships before them, they decided to find homes in the New World. The first representatives to arrive were probably among the Dutch merchants who early visited New Amsterdam, now New York. The colonial records of that territory refer to Mennonites on Manhattan Island as early as 1643. Cornelius Plockhoy established a small communist colony in what is now Delaware in 1663. But the history of these early settlements is vague and the colonies soon disappear entirely from the records.

---

[4] For further information regarding the Mennonites from Russia see Chapters V, LIX.

The first permanent settlement was made at Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683, by a group of Germans of Dutch (?) ancestry in Crefeld. These were not only the first Mennonites, but the first representatives of the German race to effect a permanent settlement in America. William Penn had met Mennonites in Europe and urged them to come to his new state. These first settlers were weavers by trade, but those to follow were farmers and settled the rural districts. William Rittenhouse was the new colony's first minister. In 1708 the first log meeting house was erected. The church at Germantown never grew beyond its early numbers, although the settlements in the interior grew rapidly.

About 1702 some Swiss and German Palatines settled the Skippack region in Montgomery County. As the immigrants continued to arrive, they outgrew the Skippack territory, and other regions were claimed for settlement, mainly in Pennsylvania. The largest and most important of the settlements was the Pequea colony, made upon Pequea Creek in present-day Lancaster County. This colony was begun in 1710.

This immigration had practically ceased by the year 1760. Then out from this region in southeastern Pennsylvania, the Mennonites spread into the fertile valleys of central Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. They were thus located by the year 1800, after which date no new settlements were made in those states. These communities in turn became the mother congregations of new settlements made in the West, where Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas provided farms for the expanding colonies throughout the eighteenth century. Settlements eventually reached the Pacific Coast. Others migrated to Ontario from 1800 to 1840, where several strong settlements were made.

The Amish also sought refuge in America. Although the first representatives may have arrived earlier, the actual immigration did not begin until about 1735. Between this date and 1750 the Amish must have arrived in considerable numbers. One of their earliest congregations was a settlement along North Kill Creek in what is now Berks County. Some Amish also settled in eastern Lancaster County. These scattered to other counties and indirectly and directly to other states; chiefly, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and a few to Illinois.

Another wave of immigration, from 1820 to 1860, brought both Mennonites and Amish from South Germany and Switzerland. The great bulk of these settled west of the Alleghenies in Ohio, Ontario, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. In some cases they reënforced established settlements, and in others they opened new ones.

What might be called the third wave of immigration was from Russia during the period from 1873 to 1880. Owing to the policy of russification on the part of the Russian government, the Mennonites of that country lost the special privileges which had been theirs for so many years. So they turned their eyes toward America.

Bernhard Warkentin and Cornelius Jansen, who were the first to arrive in this country, did much in assisting their fellow-immigrants. The American Mennonites organized emergency committees to aid their newly arrived brethren. Various state governments and railroad companies deserve credit for their valuable assistance. Settlements were begun in Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, and Minnesota. At the same time other immigrants arrived and settled in Manitoba. (From 1893 on the surplus of Manitoba settled in Saskatchewan.) It was a painful struggle against great odds for a number of years until these newer Mennonites were able to make progress and adjust themselves to their adopted land. However, at the present time they are firmly established, and many of them are prosperous. Some of them joined existing branches when they arrived here; however, all the important factions, including ultra-conservatives, which existed in Russia, were transplanted to American soil and have maintained themselves to the present.

Through organized missionary effort, Mennonite churches have been established in India, Africa, China, Malaysia and South America so that while the total Mennonite body is not numerically large it is well extended over the earth. The following table gives the approximate numerical strength of Mennonites (children included) in the various countries of the world where they are to be found:[5]

NORTH AMERICA

United States and Canada	250,000
Mexico	7,500

---

[5] Statistics from current yearbooks and latest census reports. Where accurate figures were unavailable, estimates were made. Where statistics included only baptized members, the number of unbaptized adherents including children was estimated. The figures as given are for the total Mennonite population and are only approximate.

SOUTH AMERICA	
Argentina	250
Paraguay	2,750
Brazil	1,000
EUROPE	
Netherlands	65,000
Switzerland	1,500
Poland	1,000
Germany and Danzig	20.000
Russia	85,000
France, Alsace-Lorraine	3,500
AFRICA	
Belgian Congo	350
ASIA	
India—Central Provinces	2,500
China	650
Total	441,000

CHAPTER II

THE MENNONITES AND OTHER DENOMINATIONS

Mennonites have always much preferred to live aloof from other people. But it is impossible to live in the world without coming in touch with others. Even the communistic Hutterites have discovered that there are unavoidable contacts with those outside the Bruderhof. The world of the Anabaptists or early Mennonites was essentially cruel. The various governments of Europe used their utmost power to crush them. The saddest part of this persecution was that the different state churches were the chief impelling forces behind these governments. It mattered not whether it were Catholic, Reformed, or Lutheran, the oppression was equally grinding. In respect to extent and severity, there is little in the history of Christianity to compare to the suffering which the Mennonites endured.[1] Aside from the many fearful tales of suffering in the *Martyrs' Mirror,*[2] more were enacted which were never recorded.

Mention has already been made of the manner in which Zwingli caused the Reformed Church and the Zurich Government to banish and execute "the Brethren." The state church of Switzerland continued its oppression until only a remnant was left. Nor was the Reformed Church of the Netherlands more tolerant. As soon as the Catholic Church there lost its influence upon the temporal powers, the Calvinistic Reformed Church assumed the role of persecutor.[3] Fortunately the Netherlands government was more lenient than the church officials, so that religious toleration came early in the Netherlands, about 1577.

---

[1] Pennypacker, *Pennsylvania in American History,* p. 198.

[2] The *Martyrs' Mirror,* as the name suggests, is a compilation of the sufferings and death of a long list of martyrs from the time of Christ including principally those from the Waldenses, Wycliffites, Hussites, Anabaptists and Mennonites. The voluminous book was first issued in its present form in the Dutch language in 1660 by Thielman J. van Bracht, a Dutch Mennonite theologian. It was translated into German and printed at Ephrata, Pennsylvania in 1748, the first large book published in America. There have been a number of editions since this first one. John F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana, in 1887 brought out the last English edition which he rightfully considered the supreme task of his life work in Mennonite publication endeavors.

The Lutherans were just as intense in their hatred as the Catholic and Reformed bodies. It seems unbelievable that so remarkable a man as Martin Luther should speak of Menno Simons as a "hedge-preacher who associates with laborers in the harvest fields or charcoal-burners in the woods." His opinion of Menno's followers was just as disrespectful. Luther's right-hand man, Melancthon, called them "a devilish sect whose leaders should receive the sharpest punishments."[4] He attributed their willingness to die for their faith to the hardening of their hearts by Satan.

When these religious bodies who had persecuted the Mennonites so intensely were transplanted into the atmosphere of religious liberty in America, the situation was changed so that they had more to do with the Mennonites. Occasionally there were incidental contacts of a more friendly nature. For instance, at Germantown, one Lutheran, two Episcopal, and one Presbyterian Church were all first organized in the little Mennonite meeting-house. The first service of the German Lutheran Church in America was held in the house of a Mennonite.[5] Many of these groups also drew heavily upon the Mennonites for their membership then as well as now.

---

[3] Smith, *Mennonites of America*, p. 66.

[4] Dosker, *The Dutch Anabaptists*, p. 30 ff.

[5] Smith, *The Mennonites*, p. 199.

Sometimes the claim is made that the Mennonite Church is the mother of a number of later denominations. This is true only in the sense of spiritual motherhood of doctrine and policy, and in some contribution of Mennonite blood to membership in the other denominations. Since the Mennonites arose early in the Reformation and are as old as any other denomination,[6] it is interesting to trace relationships with several religious bodies that arose later.

During the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and her successors, many Dutch came to southeastern England. Some were attracted by the close commercial relations between the two countries, while others sought a refuge from the cruel Catholic persecution in the Netherlands. Over a hundred thousand are said to have left their homes during the bloody rule of Alva. Undoubtedly many of these were Mennonites.[7] They must have carefully concealed their identity, for there was little persecution brought upon them. They ultimately joined the church of their adopted land and intermarried with its countrymen. But the ancient principles were never wholly forgotten. It is in this section of the country that the non-conformist movement arose which found organized expression in the Congregational and Baptist Churches.

The Quakers, more correctly called the Society of Friends, are another phase of this same non-conformist movement in England. It would seem that they too received their distinctive ideas from the same influence. For although Fox spoke harshly against them, he adopted some of the same principles which the Mennonites held dear.[8] George Fox, the founder of English Quakerism, began to preach in southeastern England in *1647. Robert Barclay, a Quaker authority on the subject, comments upon the similarity between his denomination and the Mennonites as follows: "So closely do these views correspond with those of George Fox, that we are compelled to view him as the unconscious exponent of the doctrine, practice, and discipline of the ancient strict party of Dutch Mennonites, at a period when under pressure of the times some deviation took place among the General Baptists from their original principles." The late Professor Oswald Seidensticker, of the University of Pennsylvania, agrees: "The resemblance of the two sects is tested, not by their respective professions of faith, but by this agreement upon the salient features of the Christian life and duty. Both laid the greatest stress on inward piety, and a godly, humble life; considered all strife and warfare as unchristian, scrupulously abstained from taking oath, declared against a paid ministry, exercised through their meetings a strict discipline, favored silent prayer, were opposed to infant baptism, and looked upon the established church as an unhallowed vessel of divine truth. The freedom of worship warranted to the Mennonites and other sects in Holland was the shelter under which the Friends introduced their doctrines and organized their Society."

---

[6] The first Protestant body to be officially organized was the Lutheran Church in Sweden in 1524; second was the Swiss Brethren at Zurich in 1525; third was the Lutheran Church in Saxony, 1525; the fourth was the Zwinglian Church in Zurich, 1525.

[7] Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 70 ff.

Whatever their origin may have been, the English Quakers very early in their history crossed over into Holland and northwestern Germany to propagate their faith. William Ames was one of the first missionaries to visit the continent, where he found his way to many of the Mennonite strongholds. He won a number from them to his faith. These English enthusiasts seem to have been well received by the Mennonites. After the work had been well begun, a number of Quaker leaders, including Barclay, Fox and Penn, in 1677 made a significant tour among Friends and Mennonites of the mainland. This no doubt had an important bearing upon the future settlement of Pennsylvania. Quaker apostles continued to visit the continent.

---

[8] Dosker, *Dutch Anabaptists*, p. 294 f.

* Symbol signifies date of origin of the group.

Thus it can be seen that Mennonites and Quakers were by no means strangers. The first Quakers came to America to the Massachusetts colony in †1656.[9] But extensive immigration did not start until William Penn began the colonization of Pennsylvania in 1681. Many Quakers and Mennonites of the continent were glad to accept the invitation of Penn's agents to settle in "the promised land of freedom." The first permanent colony of Quakers and Mennonites in America was established at Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683, by a group of artisans and weavers from the town of Crefeld and surrounding region along the lower Rhine near the Dutch border. Here the colony met in common worship until new additions warranted separate organizations. The Quakers built their first meeting house in 1705 and the Mennonites in 1708. This illustrates how intimate were the relations between Quakers and Mennonites during the Colonial period.[10] There has been no real affiliation between the two bodies, but they have not grown as wide apart as the Mennonites and the more popular churches. During periods of war they are drawn into closer relations, owing to their common attitude against war. In the recent war the Mennonites assisted the Quakers in their reconstruction program in France by furnishing both funds and workers.

---

† Symbol signifies date of appearance in America.

[9] Montgomery, *American History*, p. 91 f.

[10] Smith, *Mennonites of America*, p. 94 ff.

In Illinois there has been little direct contact of Mennonites with Quakers for the reason that the latter are so few in number. A few settled in McLean County in ‡1825. The Hicksite branch at the present time holds meetings at the Hull House, Chicago, at Clear Creek, near McNabb, Putnam County and at Benjaminville. At one time there were also meetings at Hoopeston and Sterling. The membership of this branch in Illinois is about 325. The only other branch is the Five Years' Meeting, which holds sessions at Chicago, and near Vermilion Grove in Vermilion County. The Friends have no schools or other institutions in the state.[11]

The Dunkards, officially called "Church of the Brethren," arose from among the Pietists in Germany in *1708. Alexander Mack was their founder. At first a member of the Reformed Church, he became dissatisfied and withdrew to become a follower of the noted separatist, Hochmann von Hohenau. He traveled among the Mennonites of Germany in the hope of finding among them people with his ideals of Christian life. While the ideals of the Mennonites were quite similar, he did not find them ready to admit that immersion was the only true mode of baptism. The movement took definite shape at Schwarzenau, in the province of Wittgenstein, in Hesse-Cassel, when eight persons after careful prayer and prolonged study walked slowly and solemnly from the house of Alexander Mack to the river Ender. Here early in the morning, surrounded by the many curious witnesses, they knelt in prayer. One of them led Mack into the water and immersed him three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mack in turn baptized the other seven in the same fashion. When they organized a new congregation, Mack was chosen as their leader.[12] They had all been members of a Protestant church before 1708. Besides Mack, six of them had belonged to the Reformed Church, while the seventh had been a Lutheran. Thus began the Täufer or German Baptist church, commonly referred to as Dunkards from the German word "tunken," which means "to dip", now officially called "Church of the Brethren."

---

‡ Symbol signifies date of appearance in Illinois.

[11] Letter from J. Barnard Walton, general secretary of the General Conference of the Religious Society of Friends, Philadelphia, Pa., May 6, 1925.

The resultant church was so similar to the Mennonites that one cannot escape the conviction that perhaps unconsciously Mack drew much of the faith and practice adopted by his group from Mennonite sources. Though it is impossible to trace any organic relation, it is certain that the new movement drew upon Mennonite blood for its membership.

The Dunkards were soon driven to Crefeld where they gained several adherents among the Mennonites. In †1719 they came to Germantown and there again won over some more from the Mennonite faith. It would be difficult to explain family relationships, likeness in doctrine and practice, customs in dress, rural life and general religious attitude if there never were any connection. It is also interesting to note that Dunkard churches early sprang up in practically all of the Mennonite communities in America. At the time of the Revolution Mennonites and Dunkards united in sending a petition to the Assembly of Pennsylvania.[13]

In ‡1808 some Dunkard members, indirectly from Pennsylvania, moved to Union County in the extreme southern part of Illinois. About 1840 a settlement was founded in the northern section of the state. Since that time the Dunkards have had a very steady growth, until at the present time they have in the state fifty congregations with a membership of 5500. The national body maintains Bethany Bible School, a Seminary founded in Chicago in 1905, and Mt. Morris College at Mt. Morris, Illinois, founded in 1878. They have a publishing house at Elgin, Old Folks' Home at Mt. Morris, and an orphanage at Girard, Illinois. Aside from the main body there is a progressive group with a smaller membership, called "The Brethren Church."[14]

---

[12] Brumbaugh, *History of the Brethren,* p. 29 ff.

[13] Smith, *Mennonites of America,* pp. 370-72, where the petition is recorded in full.

The Dunkards in Illinois awoke to their responsibilities much earlier than the Mennonites and as a result have a larger membership, and their activities are much older. Various Dunkard institutions have been patronized by Mennonites of the state but the interrelationships between the two bodies have been relatively insignificant.

Nationally the Conference of Pacifist Churches sponsored by Friends, Brethren, Mennonites, and others, has brought these bodies into some slight contact. The first one was held at Bluffton, Ohio, in 1922, the second at Huntington, Pennsylvania, in 1923, the third at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1924, the fourth at Wichita, Kansas, in 1925, the fifth at Danvers. Illinois, in 1926, and the last at North Manchester, Indiana, in 1927.

The chief contact of other denominations with Mennonites consisted of continual proselyting among them. This not only reduced their numbers, but took away many potential leaders, which left the church less aggressive. Very rarely did the Mennonites receive any members from outside sources, because they did not proselyte. A few of the Hugenots who drifted into Pennsylvania, such as the

---

[14] Information furnished by Rev. S. S. Blough, Pastor of the Brethren Church, Sterling, Illinois, March 15, 1925.

LeFevres in Lancaster County and the DeTurks in Berks County, the Bertolets and the Fahrnis, cast their lot with the Mennonites. However, the losses far outweighed these small gains. Proselyting and absorption of the young Mennonite blood has been referred to in connection with the denominations discussed above, but there were also other sects that made considerable inroads.

Ambitious young Mennonites desirous of advanced training have gone to denominational colleges and seminaries and have been drawn away from their original faith to another which has furnished the education. Then too, almost every new sect that arises is quite certain to gain some adherents from the Mennonites. In Illinois the Seventh Day Adventists, the Divine Healers of Zion City, and similar bodies have not appealed in vain for Mennonite proselytes.

Mennonite relations to other Christian groups can be summarized as follows: (1) persecution by Catholic and Reformation bodies; this was abusive treatment to which the Mennonites did not retaliate; (2) spiritual motherhood by Mennonites, without active propagation of religious principles, of such bodies as the Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers and Dunkards; (3) proselyting by but not from other religious bodies in general, and (4) moral influence on their neighborhoods, which, though indirect and indefinite, helped to create a religious atmosphere.

CHAPTER III

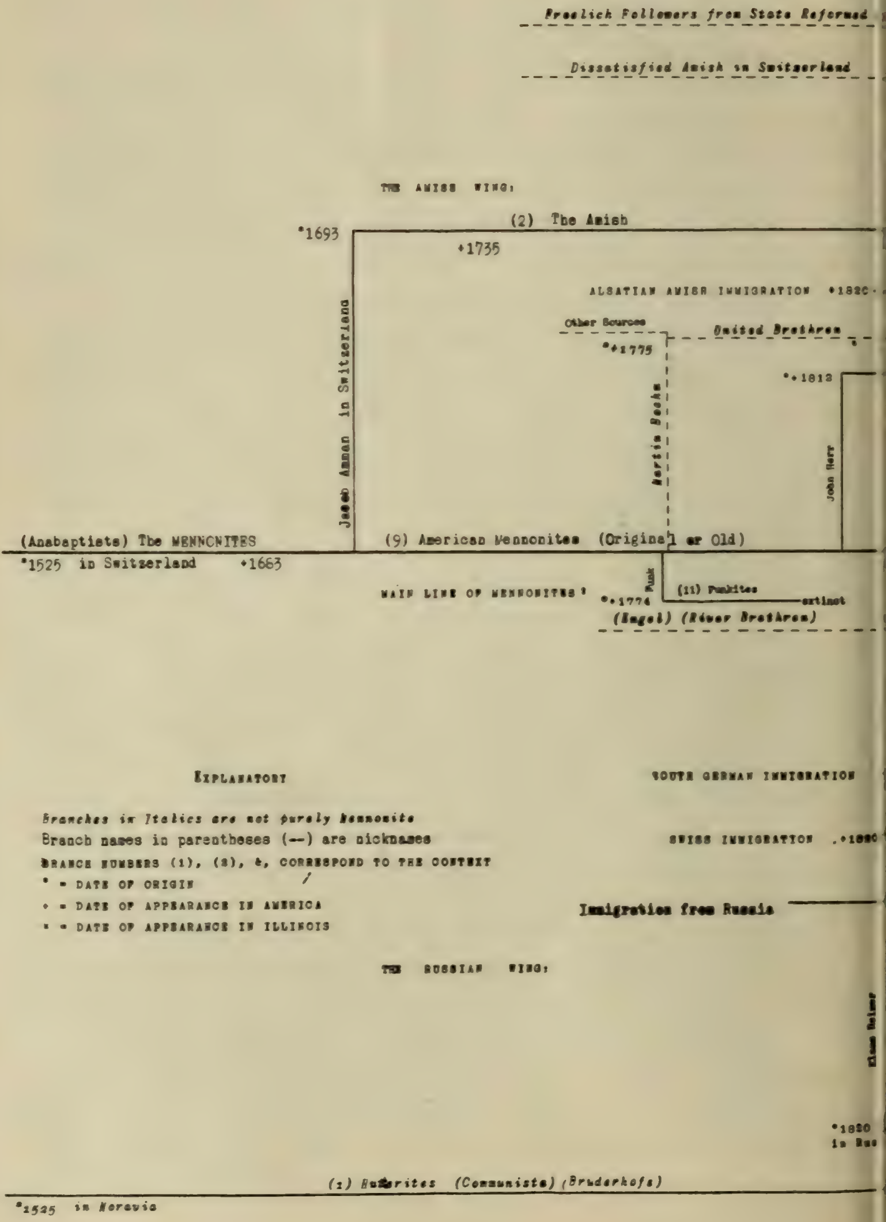
THE AMISH WING

Since the Mennonite denomination is divided and subdivided into many branches, it is exceptionally difficult to comprehend the interrelationships that exist between them. But unless a clear understanding of these branches is gained, it will be impossible to follow "The History of the Mennonites of Illinois," which includes twelve of these branches. Therefore following the next page a detailed diagram is presented. This chapter and the two that follow it will be devoted to elucidating this chart. Each horizontal line represents a branch. The line, with the dates and names written with it, gives the following information in regard to the history of the branch: official name, with nicknames in parentheses; year of origin as shown by * preceding a date; year of first appearance in America as shown by † preceding a date; year of first appearance in Illinois (if ever in the state) as shown by ‡ preceding a date; branch from which derived, as shown by vertical line connecting with the parent body; and founder, whose name usually appears on that vertical line. The branches whose names are in italics are not purely Mennonite. The variation in size of type is used to distinguish the importance of the branches. In the context of these three chapters a brief history is given, each of the branches being treated individually and in chronological order, with the exception of histories of off-springing branches, which are treated immediately following their parent body. The branches are numbered in the order discussed, and to facilitate reference, corresponding numbers are repeated in parentheses on the chart. The same numbering is used on the maps which are to be found at the end of the book. The diagram naturally falls into three parts. The upper third is "The Amish Wing" which consists of Jacob Amman's followers and all the subsequent subdivisions and related bodies. The middle is devoted to "The Main Line of Mennonites," consisting of many branches. The lower part of the diagram contains "The Russian Wing," which includes all the Mennonite groups which emigrated from Russia to America. A chapter is given over to each of these parts in the order stated above.

(1) The Hutterites are very difficult to classify, for they do not belong to any one of the parts. In their customs and practices they resemble the Amish, especially the Old Order. In manner of origin they may be accounted as belonging to the main line of Mennonites. Yet considering the fact that they lived in Russia before they emigrated to America, they could be placed in the Russian Wing. Owing to this uncertainty in classification, and also because they date back to Anabaptist times (1525—35), they will be disposed of first.

In Moravia, some of the Anabaptists came in 1528ff to adopt the communism of Jacob Hutter, a Tyrolese hatter, after whom they were named Hutterites. The Hutterites agreed with the other Anabaptists, elsewhere known as Mennonites, in all the essential Anabaptist doctrines, such as adult baptism, complete separation of church and state, and nonresistance. They also refused to pay war taxes. For a long time they were in rather close touch with the Mennonites in Switzerland and South Germany. They usually attended important general conferences, being represented at the Strasburg meeting of 1557, where Menno Simons' Wismar rules were discussed. In times of distress they called upon their Dutch Mennonite brethren for help. Although they did not bear the name Mennonite, they must be included in any history of that

THE MENNONITE D


Froelich Followers from State Reformed
Dissatisfied Amish in Switzerland
THE AMISH WING:
(2) The Amish
*1693
+1735
Jacob Amman in Switzerland
ALSATIAN AMISH IMMIGRATION +1820
Other Sources
United Brethren
*+1775
Martin Boehm
*+1812
John Herr
(Anabaptists) The MENNONITES
*1525 in Switzerland
+1683
(9) American Mennonites (Original or Old)
Funk
(11) Funkites
extinct
MAIN LINE OF MENNONITES
*+1774
(Engel) (River Brethren)
SOUTH GERMAN IMMIGRATION
SWISS IMMIGRATION .+1880
Immigration from Russia
THE RUSSIAN WING:
Claas Reimer
*1820
in Rus
(1) Hutterites (Communists) (Bruderhofs)
*1525 in Moravia

EXPLANATORY

Branches in Italics are not purely Mennonite

Branch names in parentheses (—) are nicknames

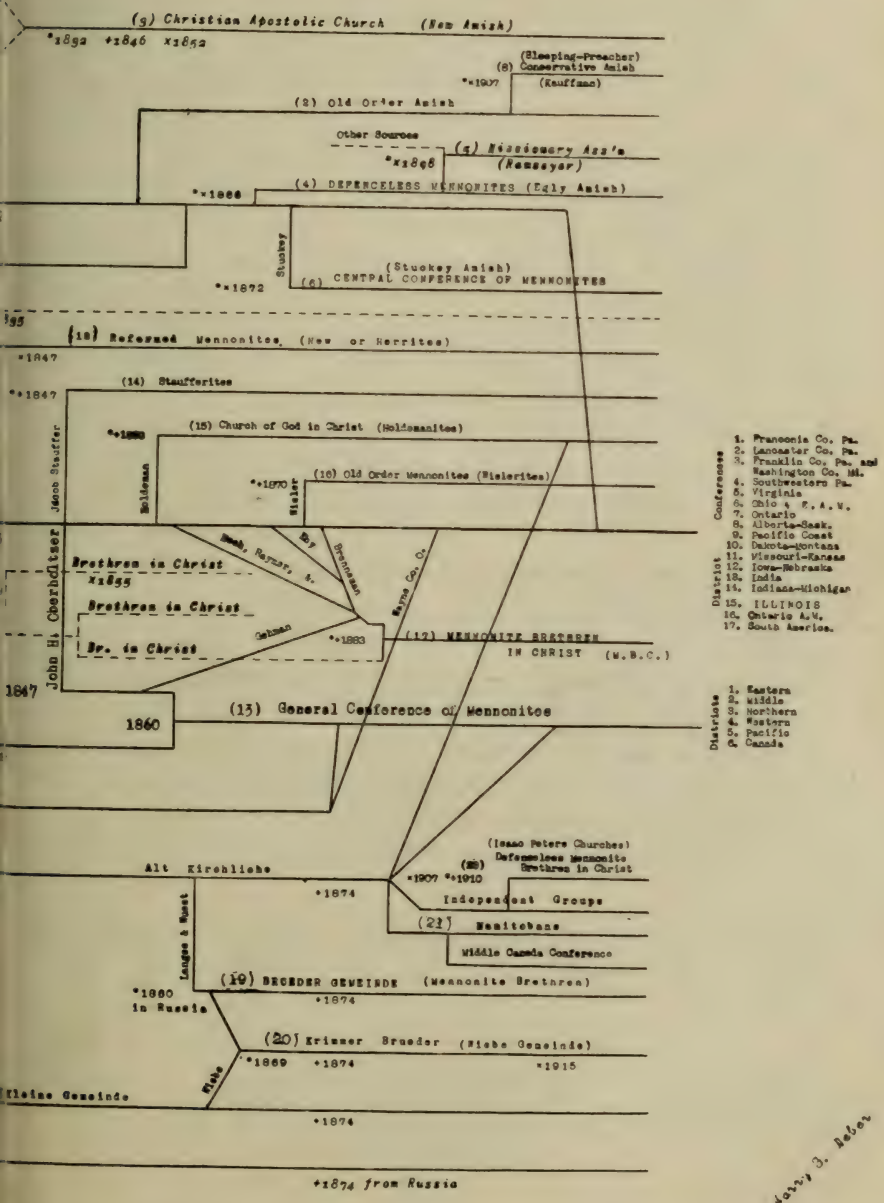
BRANCH NUMBERS (1), (2), &, CORRESPOND TO THE CONTEXT

* = DATE OF ORIGIN

+ = DATE OF APPEARANCE IN AMERICA

x = DATE OF APPEARANCE IN ILLINOIS

IN AMERICA 1926.



(9) Christian Apostolic Church (New Amish)
*1892 +1846 x1852
(Sleeping-Preacher)
(8) Conservative Amish
*×1907
(Kauffman)
(2) Old Order Amish
Other Sources
(5) Missionary Ass'n
*x1898
(Ramseyer)
*×1866
(4) DEFENCELESS MENNONITES (Egly Amish)
Stuckey
(Stuckey Amish)
(6) CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES
*×1872
'95
(18) Reformed Mennonites (New or Herrites)
*1847
(14) Staufferites
*+1847
Jacob Stauffer
(15) Church of God in Christ (Holdemanites)
*+1859
Holdeman
(16) Old Order Mennonites (Wislerites)
*+1870
Wisler
Conferences
1. Franconia Co. Pa.
2. Lancaster Co. Pa.
3. Franklin Co. Pa. and Washington Co. Md.
4. Southwestern Pa.
5. Virginia
6. Ohio & E.A.M.
7. Ontario
8. Alberta-Sask.
9. Pacific Coast
10. Dakota-Montana
11. Missouri-Kansas
12. Iowa-Nebraska
13. India
14. Indiana-Michigan
15. ILLINOIS
16. Ontario A.M.
17. South America.
District
John H. Oberholtzer
Brethren in Christ
x1855
Brethren in Christ
Br. in Christ
Hoch, Raynor, &.
Eby
Brenneman
Wayne Co. O.
Gehman
*+1883
(17) MENNONITE BRETHREN IN CHRIST (M.B.C.)
1847
1860
(13) General Conference of Mennonites
Districts
1. Eastern
2. Middle
3. Northern
4. Western
5. Pacific
6. Canada
(Isaac Peters Churches)
Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ
(22)
Alt Kirchliche
+1874
×1907 *+1910
Independent Groups
(21) Manitobans
Middle Canada Conference
Langes & Wuest
(19) BRUEDER GEMEINDE (Mennonite Brethren)
*1860 in Russia
+1874
(20) Krimmer Brueder (Wiebe Gemeinde)
*1869
+1874
×1915
Wiebe
Kleine Gemeinde
+1874
+1874 from Russia
Harry F. Weber

body of believers.[1] In one important matter, however, they differed from the other Anabaptists known as Mennonites. They were communists, working together for a common fund and having all things common. When a new member joined their company, he turned over all his property into the common treasury.[2]

At first the Hutterites were treated well by their rulers, but later they were made to suffer terrible persecution until 1767, when nearly all who were left emigrated to Hungary and Transylvania and later to Russia. In this land they fared little better. They moved from place to place, until finally a remnant settled on the Crown lands in the Molotschna. When universal military service was introduced in Russia, the entire group emigrated (in †1874) to South Dakota, where about half of them still maintained their communism. The communistic half migrated to Alberta and Saskatchewan on account of persecution during the World War.

(2) The Amish, the first definite division of the denomination which has any bearing on Mennonite History in America originated in *1693 in Switzerland. Jacob Amman, minister in the Swiss Mennonite Church, thought the church was too liberal, especially on the matter of "shunning."[3] He became so insistent on the necessity of this idea that the Swiss churches were divided into two parties, each of which refused to associate with the other. Amman's party was the more conservative, insisting upon

---

[1] Nevertheless the Hutterites deny any connection with the Mennonites, nor do they associate with them in any manner here in America. During the war they were classified as Mennonites by the government.

[2] Smith, *The Mennonites*, p. 139.

[3] Shunning or Avoidance was a misunderstood doctrine concerning the treatment of members of the church who had been "set back," that is, to whom the ban of excommunication had been applied, forbidding participation in the Lord's Supper.

a strict observance of the customs and worship of the past without change.

The first Amish emigrants arrived in America about †1735. A few may have come sooner, but the bulk came between that date and the middle of the century. They settled in eastern Pennsylvania in the counties of Chester, Berks and Lancaster, spreading to surrounding states and entering the more western regions as the East became settled. The first Amish came to Illinois in ‡1829, settling in the territory between Peoria and Bloomington. But these came from Europe via Butler County, Ohio, not from Pennsylvania. Only a few Pennsylvania Amish families from Mifflin Co., 1848-52, came to Illinois. As the number of members increased, they spread over central Illinois. At first they maintained the "good old ways of the fathers," wore hooks and eyes, and held aloof from all new things. But several degrees of change, which have produced several branches, have taken place. Those who still retain the original Amish customs, although they are a later group, not descendants of the original settlers, are generally called "Old Order Amish." There is a large settlement of them at Arthur, Illinois at the present time. They form the main line of Amish without any departure for they are strictly "plain." That is, they have no church houses, wear home-made clothing without buttons, and have no adornments or elaborate furniture in their homes.[4]

(3) The New Amish originated in Switzerland in *1832. Samuel Froehlich, a theological student, was excluded from the State Church of Switzerland. Beginning to organize a church of his own, he visited the Emmenthal congregation, where he met Christian Baumgartner and Samuel Gerber. The latter, who had been recently installed as an Emmenthal minister, was ambitious to play a

---

[4] For a complete description and history of the Arthur Settlement of "Old Order Amish" in Illinois see Chapter LV.

prominent part in his group. Accusing his fellow ministers of a lack of religious zeal and an absence of spiritual life, he introduced a series of innovations in his charge contrary to the rules of the church. Thus the soil was well prepared for a division. Froehlich, who had a small following of State Church members in Aargau, was soon compelled to leave the Emmenthal owing to pressure from the police officials. He sent a representative, however, in the person of a disciple of his, George Steiger by name. Steiger took advantage of the local quarrel and invited the disaffected to join the Froehlich following. Gerber, Baumgartner, and others, who had already been celebrating the communion service among themselves every Sunday, hesitated to accept the invitation, because Steiger now declared their old faith to be a dead faith, and consequently all who joined the new movement would need to submit to rebaptism by immersion. This was rather humiliating to men who had all along assumed a superior piety among their fellows. They finally submitted, however, and in the course of a few months Steiger won over about sixty members from the Emmenthal churches, including about equal numbers from the Mennonite and State churches.

The new sect early developed an air of superior sanctity and a spirit of exclusiveness. Salvation was possible only through the avenue of their church. All others belonged to the "world," with whom there was to be no religious fellowship whatever. At first meetings were held every night after the supposedly apostolic example. Communion was administered every Sabbath morning, while religious services were held in the afternoon. To the government they owed no allegiance except to pay their taxes, and naturally they could hold no civil office. This was evidently the Mennonite contribution to the new body. "Salute no man by the way" was observed literally, especially when they met members of the church from which they had withdrawn. They bitterly denounced the old church and ridiculed its ministers as "Babblers and Preachers of a dead faith."

The adherents to the new faith spoke of themselves as the "Glaeubige," that is, "the believers," but more recently they have assumed the official name, "Christian Apostolic Church."

The first of these Neu Täufer or New Amish, as they are commonly called, came to Ohio from Switzerland in 1846, where they secured a small following among their countrymen in the Wayne County Mennonite settlement. In 1852, several appeared among the Amish in Lewis County, New York, where they caused the usual disturbance. Soon after this a few zealous proselytes to the new following from the latter place arrived among some of their kinsmen in the Amish settlement in Woodford County, Illinois, where they secured a few more disgruntled church members for their faith. In 1862 one of the leaders from Illinois established a small following in Butler County, Ohio. Illinois has remained, however, the center of the new sect. The growth for many years was slow. By 1877 there were only eighty-nine members in the United States and the membership would have remained insignificant had not a large number of immigrants from Switzerland within recent years been added to the original nucleus. There are at present a number of large congregations in Woodford, Tazewell, and Livingston counties, Illinois, aggregating perhaps several thousand members. Small communities have lately also been established in Indiana and other states.[5]

(4) The Defenseless Mennonites, unlike the branches mentioned before, originated on American soil. Hardly

---

[5] The New Amish of Illinois are given fuller treatment in Chapter X.

had the New Amish disturbance blown over, when another little storm center developed among the Amish of the Middle West, at first in Adams County, Indiana, but later also in Illinois and Ohio. The leader of this new movement was Henry Egly,[3] a minister in the Amish congregation of Adams County, Indiana. About 1864 Egly began to urge the necessity of a definite conversion experience in the religious life. His charge that the religious life of the time was too formal and was not based on a vital experience may have had some ground, but the contention that the austere, simply dressed brethren of that day were too liberal in their dress regulations can hardly be taken seriously. In †1866 Egly withdrew from the old church and formed a new one, which soon included the larger part of his former congregation. The movement later spread to Livingston and Tazewell counties, Illinois, where several large congregations have since developed.

At first Egly's followers were strict in their dress regulations, rather exclusive in their religious affiliations, and rebaptized all those of their members who had come from the old church who could not confess that they had been truly converted before, a confession which of course under the circumstances few could make. In recent years the old differences have largely disappeared, and the younger generation of the two groups have forgotten that they are not of one faith. They are optional immersionists, and have discarded the former dress restrictions. In every other respect their faith and practice is identical with that of the Amish Mennonites and the other more conservative wings of the Mennonite denomination. At first they were spoken of as the "Egly Amish" by members of the church which they left, but they later officially assumed the name Defenseless Mennonites.[7]

---

[6] See Chapter XXXVI.

[7] Smith, *The Mennonites,* p. 223 f.

The Defenseless Conference is fully treated in Chapters XXXVI—XLVII.

(5) The formation of the Missionary Church Association was a case of history repeating itself. Toward the close of the century, a few of the Defenseless Mennonites joined with others not Mennonites in developing a new movement. This new body accused the mother church of lifelessness, just as Egly had accused the parent body of his church. Missionary work was strongly stressed by the new organization. Beginning in 1896 churches were formed which drew heavily upon the Defenseless Mennonite congregations, splitting all of them except the Salem church at Gridley, Illinois. In *‡1898 these congregations formed a conference under the name of the Missionary Church Association. Since it originated from a double source, the resultant body is not a purely Mennonite branch.[8]

(6) The Central Conference of Mennonites is a purely Illinois creation. Joseph Stuckey[9], who was bishop of the North Danvers Church and active in the General Amish conference, was in reality expelled in October, *‡1872 by an eastern Amish committee because he would not censure one of the members of his church who was attracted by universalist teachings. Stuckey's church remained with him, but from that time followed an independent existence. Stuckey was the means of organizing many other churches, some outside the state. Being disappointed with conferences, he did not respond to the invitation of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America to send delegates to their sessions. His followers, nicknamed "Stuckey Amish" or "Stuckeyites," finally felt the need of some organization, and in 1899 they formed the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites. Since that time a number of out-of-state churches

---

[8] Chapter XLVII is devoted to the Missionary Church Association.

[9] See Chapter XLIX.

have joined the conference, and hence the word Illinois has been dropped from the official name of the branch.

In doctrine this branch of the church does not differ from the main body. In practice the members are a bit more liberal, especially with regard to dress, than the old Mennonites. Women were permitted to wear hats instead of bonnets,[10] and musical instruments are used in church worship. However, the group adheres to the 1632 Dortrecht Confession of faith, and practices feet-washing at the communion service.[11]

(7) The Amish Mennonites are the more progressive Amish who developed similarly to the main body of (old) Mennonites. For that reason the word "Mennonite" has been appended as part of the name of their division, although strictly speaking all "Amish" are "Amish Mennonites." There were many Amish who, although not maintaining the status quo of the "Old Order," nevertheless did not follow the Defenseless or Central Conference branches. Their departure, which was not so great, was less apparent because it was so gradual. No date can be set for the beginning of the Amish Mennonite branch, unless one wishes to use the date of conference formation. However, they had begun to feel a group-consciousness many years before a conference was formed. Ever since the General Amish conference (first started in 1862) had been abandoned in 1878, there had lingered a desire for some form of unity among some of the Amish. Those who came to be designated as Amish-Mennonites, ultimately formed three Amish Mennonite conferences, the Eastern, Indiana, and Western. A group of ministers met in Illinois in 1882. Again the next year they met in Missouri, and the following year in Iowa. It was there, in 1884, that they decided to make their ministers' meetings

---

[10] Smith, *The Mennonites of America,* p. 252.

[11] This branch is treated at considerable length in Chaps. XLVIII-LIV.

an annual affair.[12] These meetings developed into the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference, comprising ten Amish Mennonite Churches of Illinois and twice as many more west of the Mississippi River. It held its first official meeting in the Sycamore Grove Church, in Cass County, Missouri, in May, 1890.[13] The conference was kept intact until 1920, when it was dissolved and its congregations became parts of the Mennonite district conferences in the same geographical areas.

Representatives of five Amish Mennonite congregations in Indiana first met in 1888, and formed the Indiana-Michigan Amish Mennonite conference.[14] This conference was later merged with the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in 1915, even before similar action had taken place in the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference.

The Amish Mennonites of Ohio held their first conference in 1893. In 1897, Pennsylvania congregations connected themselves with the Ohio conference. In 1904, other Eastern congregations were added, which brought the Eastern Amish Mennonite Conference into being.[15] This conference was merged with the Ohio Mennonite Conference in 1928.[16]

(8) The Conservative Amish Mennonites are the liberals of the Old Order, if that word can be used in connection with a group which is conservative. There are a great many slightly diverging groups of "Old Order Amish." In recent years there has come forth this more or less indefinite group called Conservative Amish. Un-

---

[12] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History,* p. 306 ff.

[13] *Western District A. M. Conference Record of Proceedings.*

[14] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History,* p. 285 ff.

[15] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History,* p. 250 ff.

[16] Chapters XIX-XXVIII are given over to the Amish Mennonites of Illinois.

like the Old Order, they have church buildings and Sunday schools, and support missions. A few of the congregations united themselves into a conference in 1911. They and other Amish groups not in the conference publish a periodical in German and English called *Herold der Wahrheit*.

In Illinois there is one notable division of the Conservative Amish, which will be termed the "Sleeping Preacher Group." It is the only representative of the Conservative Amish in the state. John D. Kauffman, a layman of an Old Order Amish church in Elkhart County, Indiana, began a peculiar form of trance-preaching in 1880. He would lie down as if for normal sleep but presently would get up and in a trance preach for as long as two or three hours. In the fall of ‡1907 he moved to Shelby County, Illinois, with a group of followers, where they established a church. A few congregations were formed elsewhere, but the total membership has never been large.[17]

---

[17] The Sleeping Preacher Group is treated in Chapter LVI.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAIN LINE OF MENNONITES

(9) The (old) Mennonites are the original main line of Mennonites. Having followed out the Amish wing and noted the several branches developing therefrom, it is necessary now to return to the main line of Mennonites again.

"The Mennonites, who were the first to come over, and who constituted the first type, settled in colonies, with congregations scattered and unorganized. Each congregation chose its ministers from among the local members. Gradually a certain intercourse grew up. For example, the first church was organized at Germantown. Soon after, services were held at Skippack, about thirty miles distant, and before long in numerous local meetings. Each church had its ministers, and there existed a warm intimacy between them. Naturally there was considerable coöperation among them. So, as the Mennonites spread West, they maintained friendly relations with their relatives and friends left behind. Thus there came to be a large number of Mennonite congregations, connected by ties of blood, friendship, or similarities in belief. This was in the middle of the nineteenth century the 'old' Mennonite church; and while no definite organic unity was yet manifest, there was enough similarity and coöperation to designate them as a separate body.

"The test of fellowship between congregations seems to have been the recognition of visiting ministers, by allowing them to preach. There was a great amount of traveling done by ministers, and the visiting man, if regarded as a 'brother,' would be asked to preach. Besides the ministers, there was also a Bishop or Elder who was in charge of perhaps three or four congregations. He was fully ordained, and he alone was qualified to baptize, administer the sacraments, and ordain ministers. Ministers and deacons were chosen from the local congregation, and bishops from the ministers or deacons."[1]

This main group was the original American Mennonites. Although it sustained many deflections, it remains at the present time the largest body of all branches.[2] Organically, and numerically, and by government practise, this group is entitled to use the term "Mennonite" without a descriptive adjective. "Old Mennonites," "Original Mennonites," and "American Mennonites" are names applied unofficially to the original American Mennonites. The first term is perhaps the most common and will be used where it is necessary to avoid confusion with the branches.

In the East, the (old) Mennonites early formed district conferences. It is not known when the Franconia conference was organized. The records give an account of a conference held in 1725, which is supposed to be the first Mennonite conference in America.[3] The Lancaster conference was organized about the same time.

Although district conferences had become well established among the Mennonites of Pennsylvania, general conferences never appealed to them.

Their brethren of other states took more kindly towards a general organization although the General Conference for the (old) Mennonites was not formed until 1898. "All the bishops in the church were to be members of the conference. In addition to this, each district conference was given the privilege of sending one delegate for every five congregations, provided that no conference be limited to less than three delegates."[4] The three eastern district conferences: Franconia, Lancaster County, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania,—Washington County, Maryland, of the (old) Mennonite body, have never sent delegates to the General Conference.

---

[1] Huffman, *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church,* p. 27 f.

[2] Figures given variously, but about 45,000 baptized members.

[3] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History,* p. 169.

There are at present fourteen district conferences of (old) Mennonites, one of which is the Illinois District Conference. They first settled in the state in 1833. The (old) Mennonites have their official organ, "The Gospel Herald," published by their large publishing house at Scottdale, Pennsylvania. Their mission board, the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, fosters mission work in India, South America, and in many cities of the homeland.[5] Their Board of Education owns and operates two schools, a junior college at Hesston, Kansas, and a full college at Goshen, Indiana.

(10) The Brethren in Christ are more familiarly known as "River Brethren." The first is the official name, while the latter is a nickname derived from the fact that the charter members were baptized by trine immersion in the Susquehanna River. The term "River Brethren" will be used here, with the apology that it is less easily confused with the names of the other branches. The connection between the River Brethren and the Mennonites is very difficult to determine. Historians of the Mennonites, the United Brethren, the Dunkards, and the River Brethren each have a different story to tell. It seems that Jacob Engel, who may have been a Mennonite or of Mennonite parentage in Europe, with some others, who may have been members or off-spring of Mennonites and Dunkards, somewhere near the year 1770 formed a congregation in southern Pennsylvania on the Susquehanna. This

---

[4] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History,* p. 367.

[5] The (old) Mennonites of Illinois are treated in full in Book II, Chapters XI-XVIII.

same group may have been for a time associated with Martin Boehm, one of the founders of the United Brethren Church.[6] Since Boehm appeared over-liberal in their eyes, they soon parted company with him.

Suffice it to say that the River Brethren are a "plain" people. In their customs and practices they resemble both the Mennonites and Dunkards. They insist on baptism in "living water," which is the running water of a stream. Like the Mennonites, the women wear bonnets, the devotional covering, and plain dresses. In some of "the plain communities" of Pennsylvania it is difficult to distinguish Dunkards, Mennonites, and River Brethren. The stronghold of the branch has always been in Pennsylvania, and its membership has never been large. Yet it has sustained a number of schisms. The original and larger body is the more conservative. Some of its members entered Illinois about ‡1855.[7] The only River Brethren church in the state is located at Franklin Corners, north of Morrison, Illinois. There have been churches at Shannon, Polo and Morrison. They maintain the Mount Carmel Orphanage near the church, and a mission in Chicago. They have five elders and one bishop to serve the present membership of less than a hundred.[8]

(11) The Funkites were the first branch to split from the Mennonites in America. Christian Funk, son of Bishop Heinrich Funk, who had come as a youth from South Germany to Pennsylvania, in 1727, was chosen to the ministry at Franconia in 1757. During Revolutionary times, about 1774, the question arose as to whether or not it was right to pay the war taxes. Funk, claiming that it was proper, was in the fall of 1777 denied the

---

[6] Martin Boehm had been a Mennonite preacher in Lancaster County, Pa.

[7] From Mrs. Abraham Zook, Franklin Corners, Morrison, Ill.

[8] From D. B. Martin, River Brethren elder, Dixon, Illinois and Andrew Trump, River Brethren bishop, Polo, Illinois.

right of communion and expelled from the church in *†1778. He organized a small band of his followers into a church which gradually built up small congregations at Evansburg, Line Lexington, Towamencin and several other places. In 1807 Funk made the last effort to be restored to the mother church, but the officials would not remove the ban against him. The group began to decline until about the year 1850, when it became extinct, owing in part to the facts that the original question had passed and that the then new Reformed Mennonite movement made inroads upon them.[9]

(12) The Reformed Mennonites, often called Herrites or New Mennonites, also originated in Pennsylvania. The name Reformed was simply applied for the purpose of distinguishing them. Through continued use the body has consented to the name. Francis Herr, the son of a Mennonite minister, had been expelled from the church on the alleged ground of irregularities arising out of a horse trade.[10] He, together with several of his friends, also ex-Mennonites, held religious meetings in his own house for some time after that. Upon the death of Francis Herr, John Herr, his son, took up his cause and, becoming "convicted of sin," attended the meetings of his father's associates. He finally had himself baptized by one of these associates, in turn rebaptizing them. This took place in *†1812, which year is used as the date of origin of the branch. Several others were added to the group, and John Herr was soon elected bishop. In numerous controversial pamphlets written soon after, the old church was charged with being dead, corrupt, and worldly. What Herr and his associates meant by these terms became clear

---

[9] *Funk Family History,* p. 338 ff.

[10] Daniel Musser throughout his history, *The Reformed Mennonite Church,* denies this statement. Funk, *Mennonite Church and her Accusers,* Chaps., I, II, XXXVI, XXXVII, gives rebuttal to Musser's writings.

from the practices they adopted soon after. In the main, the fundamental doctrines of the Mennonite church were retained, but in a few questions of practice they carried their principles to extreme lengths. They are still absolutely exclusive in their religious relations. All those not of their faith are of the "world." Like the New Amish of Illinois, they refuse to attend religious services of any sort if conducted by a minister of another faith. The Ban and Avoidance are rigidly applied. They are severely plain in their dress and discard all unnecessary adornment as vain and sinful. They have grown slowly and have not even held their own children.[11] The first Reformed Mennonites came to Illinois in ‡1847. There is a single church in the state, at Sterling, with a present membership of less than fifty. They maintain no institutions.[12]

(13) The General Conference of Mennonites of North America is another branch born in Pennsylvania. This largest Mennonite schism was fostered by John H. Oberholtzer, a young school teacher and minister of the (old) Mennonites in the Franconia district of Pennsylvania. In 1847, he proposed that the conference adopt a written constitution to improve the conference proceedings. The rejection of his suggestion produced a quarrel, through which, other points of divergence such as dress regulations and special meetings being added, Oberholtzer was finally, with fifteen other ministers, expelled from the conference. On October 28, *†1847, these ministers, with all or part of their congregations, organized a new conference. Later other centers were developed, and an effort was started to unify all the Mennonites into a single body. Oberholtzer worked at this with great and untiring energy. The movement grew, and aside from gaining con-

---

[11] Smith, *The Mennonites,* p. 243.

[12] The Reformed Mennonites are treated at greater length in Book IV, Chapter LVII.

gregations already in America, secured affiliation of a majority of the later immigrants.

The Summerfield, Illinois, Mennonite Church, a settlement begun in †‡1842 by immigrants from South Germany, was represented at the General Conference in 1861. It became one of the leading churches, contributing much to the cause.[13] It is the only church of this group in Illinois with the exception of the Church in Chicago which is in reality a mission.

(14) The Staufferites are a Pennsylvania body almost too small to deserve mention as a branch, but are included here by way of contrast with the Oberholtzer movement. Almost the same year that Oberholtzer withdrew from the church, Jacob Stauffer, a minister in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, was expelled.[14] But unlike Oberholtzer, who considered the (old) Mennonites too unprogressive, Stauffer considered them entirely too liberal. Though the Mennonites of that day, in matters of dress and outward display, must have been exceedingly plain and modest, yet he accused them severely in the following manner:

"One very seldom hears of salvation and the eternal heavenly treasures. Many instruct one another on worldly elections, and even electioneer for their favorite candidates. They become jurymen to judge the lawsuits, thievery, and murders of worldly people. Some have joined insurance companies. Others, even bishops and preachers, put lightning rods (through lack of faith) upon their houses. Much pride has also entered into the hearts of many. They pride themselves in their finely ornamented clothes, in the combing and braiding of hair and in the wearing of gold. Their homes are adorned with all sorts of colored and gaudy tinsels, and upon the walls hang many idolatrous pictures."[15] With this opinion of the old church, he organized a new church over which he exercised a severe discipline. The group at present numbers about two hundred and has not grown beyond the limits of the original territory.

---

[13] Krehbiel, *History of the Mennonite General Conference*, p. 78 ff. The General Conference is treated in greater detail in Book V, Chapter LVIII.

[14] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History*, p. 337.

(15) The Church of God in Christ was founded in 1858*† by John Holdeman, a layman in the (old) Mennonite Church of Wayne County, Ohio. He was ambitious to preach, but despairing of being called to the ministry through the uncertain chances of the lot, decided to preach without the conventional call. He pretended to be guided in his course of action by visions and dreams, in one of which he claimed to find a call to preach. He therefore began to hold meetings in his own house, and secured a few followers, including members of his own family. Like Herr before him, he took up his pen in defence of his own views and became a prolific writer. The old church, he maintained, had departed from the truth, and his own congregation was now the true church of God, which had maintained the lineage of the saints from the days of the Apostles. His own small following, which he now called the "Church of God in Christ," grew slowly in numbers. It has since grown, however, especially in Kansas, Manitoba, and other western states among the Russian Mennonites. The present membership is about fifteen hundred. They differ little from other Mennonites in their fundamental beliefs. Among the distinctive features introduced by Holdeman was the practise of "laying on of hands" after baptism and objection to the "taking

---

[15] Quotation from Stauffer's writings printed in Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 304, and Funk, *Mennonite Church and her Accusers,* p. 197 f.

of usury."[16] This body, usually spoken of as "Holdemanites," is in no way connected with the larger organization known as "Church of God." The Holdemanites have not made their appearance in Illinois.

(16) The Old Order Mennonites, often spoken of as Wislerites, roughly correspond among the Mennonites to the Old Order among the Amish. The Yellow Creek Congregation, Elkhart County, Indiana, became the home, like Pennsylvania in 1847,[17] of a double schism, one more conservative and one more liberal than the mother church. The Old Order Mennonites are a small branch formed from four original groups. The first group took its rise in the Yellow Creek Congregation in Indiana where Jacob Wisler was bishop. Jealousy arose between himself and his co-laborer Daniel Brenneman. Being opposed to all new things, English preaching, four-part singing, Sunday schools, evening meetings and continued meetings, he threatened to excommunicate all who insisted upon these things. This became so serious that six bishops were called into the Yellow Creek church, where they gave him a church trial and removed him from office in 1873. He and his followers then organized a new church.

For similar reasons, groups in Canada, Pennsylvania, and Virginia arose later and with the "Wislerites" made up the body of Old Order Mennonites, which to this day maintains ultra-conservative forms and customs. They are not represented within the limits of Illinois.

(17) The Mennonite Brethren in Christ is a composite of four groups. Two groups seceded directly from the main body, a third from the Oberholtzer branch, and a fourth which was a second split from the River Brethren,

---

[16] Smith, *The Mennonites*, p. 245 f., and Funk, ***Mennonite Church and her Accusers***, pp. 198-203.

[17] See Section No. 13, The General Conference of Mennonites, and No. 14, the Staufferites, in this chapter.

were amalgamated by successive steps into a single branch in *†1883. Since both the separation from the parent body and the uniting of the groups is very involved, and also since none of them are to be found in Illinois, the formation will not be discussed further.[18]

Daniel Brenneman, who had been the liberal minister under the conservative bishop Jacob Wisler, was himself soon expelled from the Yellow Creek Church. He became one of the strong leaders in the formation of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ movement.

This branch of the Mennonite denomination holds to practically all of the characteristic doctrines of the faith. As a result of the amalgamation of four different groups, however, all of which in course of time developed distinctive practices, the Mennonite Brethren now lay stress on a number of distinguishing doctrines, including immersion, open communion, entire sanctification as a definite work of grace, pre-millennialism, and feet-washing. They were among the first of Mennonite bodies to include in their discipline a recommendation against the use of tobacco and strong drink. They insist upon a thorough conversion and a definite conviction of sin, as well as a decided assurance of salvation, as a condition to membership. In their camp meetings they are inclined to give free play to their feelings, both of joy and agony of soul.

They are decidedly an evangelistic and missionary church. No other branch has reached out into non-Mennonite fields for its membership as widely as the Mennonite Brethren. One finds fewer of the characteristic old-time Mennonite names among them than among other branches. They are among the best organized of all branches, being semi-episcopal in their organization. The highest administrative officials are presiding elders elected annually over districts or conferences. Ministers are licensed to preach upon satisfactory evidence that they have a definite call to that service, and after passing an examination based on a reading course. The church is now divided into seven conference districts. A general conference is held quadrennially. The present membership is over nine thousand.

---

[18] The reader is referred to Huffman, *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church.* Page 283 has a diagram which shows very clearly the formation of that church.

CHAPTER V

THE RUSSIAN WING

The third wing of Mennonites in America arises through the immigration from Russia.[1] Mennonites from Germany had settled in Russia because Catherine the Great had given them special privileges. When the government took away these privileges about 1870, many of the Mennonites decided to come to America. The Mennonites of America formed various organizations which assisted in locating and establishing the brethren from Russia. The immigration began in †1873. These Mennonites from Russia did not represent one unified body, for during their stay in Russia several splits had been fostered. On coming to America these branches were brought along and for the most part were perpetuated here. The main body that came from Russia was called "Alt Kirchliche," (Old Church). Many of these affiliated themselves with the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, while a few joined the American Mennonites and the Church of God in Christ (Holdemanites). Several large congregations have not joined any conference. A few have formed conferences of their own.

(18) The Kleine Gemeinde is one of the branches formed in Russia and brought to America. Klaas Reimer, a Prussian minister in the Molotschna colony, believed that there should be more rigid enforcement of church discipline. About *1820, he with eighteen others withdrew from the body and later with a few similar groups formed the "Kleine Gemeinde." They were strict disci-

---

[1] See Chapter I concerning the Mennonites in Russia and their immigration to America. See also Smith, *Coming of the Russian Mennonites,* Berne, Ind., 1928.

plinarians; practised the most rigid simplicity in their clothing, houses and furniture; would not hold office, and believed it wrong to turn over a church brother to the temporal authorities to be punished; objected to excessive hilarity at weddings and to the social features of burial occasions, and condemned smoking. They declared the old church too formal and demanded a more spontaneous religious life based upon definite experience. They were decidedly seclusive and condemned all educational efforts. In 1826 feet-washing was introduced into their communion service.[2] The group, which was never large, seems to have carried its emotionalism to excess. In America they are represented in a small way in Kansas and Manitoba.

(19) The Bruedergemeinde, or Mennonite Brethren, likewise originated in Russia. The spirituality of the Mennonites in the Molotschna had reached a low ebb, but some, both within and without the body, noticed this condition and attempted to remedy it. "On January 6, *1860, a group of eighteen men, with not a preacher among them, drew up a document in which they stated their reasons for withdrawal, which they presented to the Mennonite elders. Among these reasons were:

" 'The religious decay of the entire Mennonite brotherhood, and on account of the Lord's will and our conscience we can no longer fellowship with you as a church. For we fear that God's judgment is inevitable, since the prevailing godlessness crieth unto Heaven. Besides we are fearful lest the Government repeal the special privileges granted to the Mennonites on account of their open transgressions. It is sad to behold how on market days the Mennonites carry on such a frivolous life, in which even the ministers take part.'

"The elders, of course, opposed the secession movement. For several years there was a bitter controversy between them and the new party over a separate organization. . . .

---

[2] Smith, *The Mennonites,* p. 163.

"In the main the Mennonite Brethren did not depart far from Mennonite fundamentals. The characteristic doctrines were all retained. In addition they emphasized the emotional side of religion and taught the need of a definite religious experience. They soon introduced baptism by immersion, which accounts for their intimacy with the Baptists, both in Europe and America. They also introduced feetwashing, and were strict in discipline."[3]

They have maintained a steady growth in Russia and in America. Since 1874 in America they have been quite active, at the present time numbering over 8,000. They place special emphasis upon a definite conversion experience, baptize by immersion backward, and practice feetwashing in connection with the communion. They have much in common with the Baptists and at first lost a few of their members to that church. The Adventists also have made some inroads among them. They are perhaps more conservative than their own brethren in Russia but follow an aggressive missionary and evangelistic policy. For several years beginning with 1898 their educational interests were served by a "German Department" in McPherson College, a Dunkard institution, which the conference helped to support. In 1908, however, they founded Tabor College at Hillsboro, Kansas, which has since grown into a prosperous institution. The *Zionsbote* is the official publication of the church.[4]

(20) The Krimmer Brueder (English, "Crimean Brethren"), or Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, are also of Russian origin. The Bruedergemeinde movement, as started in Russia, spread southward to the "Kleine Gemeinde" of Crimea. It was propagated there in *1869 by Jacob

---

[3] Smith, *The Mennonites*, pp. 166, 167.

[4] Smith, *The Mennonites*, p. 266 f.

Wiebe and therefore is sometimes called the "Wiebe Gemeinde." But instead of joining the main body of Bruedergemeinde, they kept their own organization on arrival in America in †1874. Their membership is found mostly in Kansas, with representatives in Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Saskatchewan. In ‡1915, they established a publishing house and opened a mission in Chicago.

Although their faith is similar to that of the Bruedergemeinde, they have retained some of the practices of the Kleine Gemeinde. They forbid marriage outside their body even with other Mennonites.[5]

(21) The Manitobans are composed of several conservative groups of Mennonites, who came from Russia and settled in Manitoba. They are analogous to the "Old Order Amish" in the Amish wing of Mennonites. There are a number of congregations or large communities, which are independent of any conferences, such as the Bergthal, the Sommerfeld, the Chortitz and the Reinland congregations. They have retained their Russian customs as far as possible. More progressive elements among the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Mennonites have formed "The Conference of Mennonites of Middle Canada." Their territory is principally the province of Saskatchewan, Canada.

(22) The Conference of Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America[6] was formed in this country in 1910 out of independent Russian groups which had settled in Nebraska and Minnesota. The leader of the Nebraska group, Isaac Peters, had been an aggressive elder of the Porduan congregation, in Russia, and had

---

[5] Smith, *The Mennonites,* pp. 168, 267.
The Krimmer Brueder are treated more completely in Book V, Chap. LIX.

[6] This group of Mennonites from Russia is not to be confused with that branch of the Amish wing called Defenseless Mennonites (Egly).

taken a conservative stand which kept his church aloof from the other congregations. He continued this policy after his church had migrated to Nebraska in †1874. Bishop Aaron Wall, leader of a conservative Minnesota group, organized the majority of his congregations into a new church. This church and the one in Nebraska, along with a few others of like nature, in 1910 formed a conference under the name "Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America." Much of their earlier opposition to progressive work has died out. In ‡1907 mission work was begun in Chicago. They also support missionaries in India and Africa.[7] At present they publish a paper in coöperation with the Defenseless Mennonites (Egly).

The following tabulation will summarize the foregoing material of diagram and context. Those branches which were in italics on the diagram and followed by * in the summary, are not purely Mennonite. The United Brethren body, although appearing on the diagram, is not listed here, because it is in no respect Mennonite. The various branches were numbered consecutively to avoid confusion in treatment and are given chronologically, not in the order of importance. The relative size of the branches can be learned from the approximate number of members.

---

[7] Smith, *The Mennonites,* p. 268 f.
The Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America are treated more fully in Book V, Chap. LIX.

SUMMARY OF MENNONITE BRANCHES IN AMERICA, 1926

*Date of origin; †date of appearance in America; ‡date of appearance in Illinois.

No.	Name (Nickname)	Founder	Membership	*	†	‡
1.	Hutterites* (Bruderhof)	Hutter	1,000	1525	1874	
	THE AMISH WING.					
2.	Amish (Old Order Amish)	Amman	8,200	1693	1735	1829
3.	Christian Apostolic* (New Amish)	Froehlich	4,000	1832	1846	1852
4.	Defenseless Mennonites (Egly Amish)	Egly	1,100	1866	1866	1866
5.	Missionary Church Association* (Mission Church)	Ramseyer	2,000	1898	1898	1898
6.	Central Conference of Mennonites (Stuckey Amish)	Stuckey	3,100	1872	1872	1872
7.	Amish-Menn. (Amish)	Gen. Development	x	1882	1882	1882
8.	Conservative Amish (Sleeping Preacher Group)	Kauffman	200	1907	1907	1907
	THE MAIN LINE OF MENNONITES.					
9.	American Menn. (Original Menn.; Old Menn.; Gen. Conf. B)	General Development	45,000	1525	1683	1833
10.	Brethren in Christ* (River Brethren)	Engel	5,000	1770?		1855
11.	Funkites (extinct)	Funk		1774	1774	
12.	Reformed Menn. (New Menn.; Herrites)	Herr	1,800	1812	1812	1847
13.	General Conference of Menn. (Oberholtzerites, General Conference A)		22,000	1847	1847	1842
14.	Stauffer Menn. (Staufferites)	Stauffer	200	1847	1847	
15.	Church of God in Christ (Holdemanites)	Holdeman	2,100	1858	1858	
16.	Old Order Menn. (Wislerites)	Wisler	2,000	1870	1870	
17.	Menn. Brethren in Christ (M. B. C.)	Brenneman	9,000	1883	1883	
	THE RUSSIAN WING.					
18.	Kleine Gemeinde (Little Church)	Reimer	500	1820	1874	
19.	Bruedergemeinde (Menn. Brethren)	Wuest	7,000	1860	1874	
20.	Krimmer Brueder (Crimean Brethren; Krimmer Menn. Brethren)	Wiebe	1,700	1869	1874	1915
21.	Manitobans and Middle Canada Conference		10,000		1874	
22.	Defenseless Menn. Brethren in Christ (Isaac Peters' Churches)	Isaac Peters	1,500	1910	1910	1907

---

x Membership included in number 9.

CHAPTER VI

MENNONITE PRINCIPLES

A. DOCTRINES

The faith of the modern Mennonite church has remained much the same as that held by the original Swiss and Dutch Anabaptists from whom the various Mennonite groups have descended. That faith was formed in the Reformation period and has always been in essence what is known as the "evangelical Protestant faith." The Mennonites have always shared in common the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity, namely, faith in the triune God, in the Bible as the Word of God, in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, the Divine Savior of man, in the enduement by the Holy Spirit with guidance and power, and in the resurrection and judgment for the life to come. There are however some emphases which the Mennonites as a whole have held which are worthy of note. The Bible has always held the central place in all the teaching of the church as the great and only source of authority for faith and life. It is held to be the Word of God which is intended to be literally believed and obeyed without question. Another central belief has been the conception of the church. For Mennonites of all times and all places the church is composed only of believers baptized upon confession of faith, a body of followers of Christ who have chosen to live separate from the world and consecrated to God and who endeavor to manifest in every phase of life the holiness and perfection of God. Emphasis has ever been laid upon the ethical teachings of Christ and the New Testament, in particular the Sermon on the Mount. A third cardinal doctrine is that of love or non-resistance that is, the doctrine that the followers of Christ are to be peaceful and are not to use force in any way in their life in the world but are to manifest love and mercy toward one another and toward the world at large, including their enemies. Therefore the Mennonites have from their origin been utterly opposed to warfare in any form and have suffered the despoiling of their goods and the loss of their homes and have migrated to foreign lands rather than to do violence to their conscience on this point. Another important principle has been that of insistence upon simplicity of life, avoidance of vanity and pride, luxury and display. This simplicity is viewed as a characteristic of the whole Christian life. It manifests itself not only in the mode of living and clothing, but also in such points as avoidance of titles and rank and the maintenance of the simple democracy of Christian brotherhood. The observance of the kiss of charity and the ordinance of feet washing while taken as commands of the New Testament to be literally observed, are also viewed as expressions of this principle.

This summary of doctrine is, to be sure, not complete, but it covers the major points. With practically no exception all the Mennonite bodies in the state of Illinois subscribe to these common principles. As a whole they have been free from aberrations and peculiarities, and have not been concerned about the development of a learned theology. Occasionally, however, religious extremists have made inroads in one or another of the branches. The most striking case of this was the falling away of some members of the central Illinois Amish communities to John Alexander Dowie, the founder of Zion City, near Chicago. Several families, some of them quite wealthy, joined the Dowie movement and moved to Zion City.

Modernism or destructive religious liberalism with its perversion of Christianity has gained no foothold in any of the Mennonite groups within the state. On the other hand some of the groups have not been altogether free of a too passive type of Christianity, have been at times indifferent to active service and work, including missions, and have manifested a tendency toward seclusiveness.

B. Social Attitudes

From the preceding chapters which describe the numerous branchings of the Mennonites one might be inclined to name them the "Divided Brethren." Not counting the "Funkites" who are extinct, the "Hutterites" who have remained independent for four centuries, and the "New Amish," the "Missionary Church Association," and the "River Brethren," who have had a double source of origin, there remain eighteen bodies in the United States. Of these, nine branches are represented in the state of Illinois. The "M. B. C.," Wisler and Holdeman branches have not appeared in Illinois. Illinois Mennonites have been less schismatic than those in Indiana and Pennsylvania.

But why are there so many branches? Dr. Smith suggests a few reasons.—"No other religious body in proportion to its size has been divided into so many factions as has the Mennonite denomination. The cause is to be sought partly in the form of church government and partly in the spirit and the character of the people composing the church. The congregational form of government permits each congregation to develop such religious practices and customs and to a certain extent such opinions as it thinks fit. This is destructive to uniformity, for uniformity is much more easily maintained where the entire body is controlled by a central authority. 1. The Mennonite, as well as the Anabaptist faith before it, always fostered a strong spirit of individualism. . . . This spirit of independence of the Mennonites, while it tends toward the development of the strongest character, yet necessarily does so at the expense of uniformity and harmony. 2. As a class the Mennonites have come from the humbler walks of life and were not trained to subordinate the non-essentials to the broader and more important interests of life. 3. And finally they were thoroughly religious and took their religion seriously. Hence such convictions as they had, they clung to persistently."[1] Dr. Huffman further explains, "It must not be forgotten, however, that Mennonites having been driven from one country to another in Europe in quest of religious freedom, national and language differences have figured in the creating of various bodies on coming to America; also that the Mennonite Church is much older than the average church with which comparisons are usually made."[2]

Members from each of these branches regret that these many divisions exist, but each seems to feel that it would be impossible to give up certain features. There never was nor will there ever be a united Mennonite denomination, though there is prospect of increasing coöperation between some groups. In fact, aside from trivial differences, the various bodies agree on the fundamental doctrines advocated by the early Swiss and Dutch Anabaptists, as was stated earlier. In addition to the fundamental doctrines described above, a few of the characteristic Mennonite social attitudes will be taken up briefly.[3]

1. Attitude towards the State.

The original attitude was separation of church and state, but since this is now one of the underlying principles of the American constitution, it is no longer of great significance to the Mennonite Church. From the beginning the Anabaptists taught that Christians could not take part in worldly offices of government which require the use of force. On this point the more liberal groups have abandoned the earlier position, but all believe that Providence has a place for governments in its divine plan. The Dort Confession[4] took this position in 1632. This confession likewise forbids the taking of the oath, which, in turn, has kept Mennonites out of public office. Menno Simons, however, did not condemn office-holders, but rather encouraged them to rule righteously, as did Paul.

---

[1] Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 291.

[2] Huffman, *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church,* p. 29 f.

[3] These headings with suggestions were taken from Hartzler—*Education Among the Mennonites of America,* p. 39ff.

2. Attitude toward Education.

Among the original leaders were well-trained men, but as persecution continued they were martyred. Since those who fostered the persecution were generally educated men, the Mennonites, associating the learning with cruel measures, opposed formal training. The "scholars," whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinistic, led in the attack on the "Brethren." No wonder learning came to be viewed as a hindrance to the truth. A salaried ministry was considered wrong, and since there was expense in gaining an education, it was feared that ministers would have to be paid. In fact, education was often considered a hindrance to spirituality. The Mennonites in America, seeing that education can be made a blessing, and is wrong only when abused, are beginning to favor institutions of higher learning.

3. Attitude towards War.

Non-resistance was one of the original principles, and it is at the present time one of the most important ones. The refusal to fight has made the state look upon the Mennonites as unpatriotic, but this opposition to being part of the military system is not in opposition to the government, but rather obedience to Christ's injunction "Resist not evil." Probably the doctrine has been applied too passively, but it is an active peace principle. It is the application of love instead of force and hate.

---

[4] The Dort Confession of Faith was drawn up, at a certain peace convention, April 21, 1632, as a basis of union for several of the branches which had developed in Central Europe. The eighteen articles were signed by 51 representatives of 17 congregations. It is the accepted confession for the majority of the branches. See *Martyrs' Mirror*, Elkhart, 1871, pp. 36 ff.

4. Attitude on Marriage.

The strength of Mennonitism has been in its homes. The Dort confession asserts that marriage must be "in the Lord" and rejects divorce altogether. The sanctity of the home has always been cherished by Mennonites as a prized possession. The group has been characterized by large families, family solidarity and sturdy family discipline.

5. Attitude towards the world.

"Simplicity," "Separation from the World," and "Non-conformity to the World" are familiar statements of the Mennonite attitude toward the world. The doctrine has been variously interpreted. It has however been tenaciously held to by most of the groups. From this doctrine some of the branches have developed applications such as dress regulations, while others have insisted on the German language. The opposition to secret orders and life insurance are other expressions of the principle. The doctrine is a Biblical one and need not be taken to mean isolation from the world. Christ holds his followers responsible, while remaining aloof from the world, for bringing salvation to it, and "separation" stands in no necessary conflict with evangelism.

6. Conception of the Church and Church Government.

The visible church is to be composed of those who believe and have been baptized. Mennonites have always intensely opposed infant baptism, contending that it is impossible for the child to possess the necessary faith. At the beginning a group of believers formed an individual congregation which was independent and exercised its own discipline. In other words the congregational form of church government in limited form was the original form of Mennonite church organization. Ministers of good report were chosen by the people to serve the congregation. Early in Europe, especially among the Amish, there was a shift towards the episcopal system of church government. The Amish and (old) Mennonites developed and practise today a semi-episcopal, semi-synodical form of church government. From the beginning the Mennonites, like the Zwinglian and many Protestant churches until recently, used no musical instruments in worship. The service consisted usually only of silent prayer, preaching, and singing. Some of these customs have persisted to the present time, but the more liberal branches have discarded them. Meetinghouses were also a later innovation. In fact the Amish and Swiss immigrants who came to America even as late as 1850 had never worshiped in church buildings in Europe.

Aggressive church methods, such as Sunday schools, evangelistic meetings, publications, homes for the aged and orphans, missions, etc., were not readily adopted by the Mennonites. In each case where they have become a part of the regular church work, they have had to undergo a period of suspicion and probation.

It should be noted again, that in spite of differences in interpretation, in method, and in non-essentials, the Mennonites in general agree upon the vital doctrines. This is certainly true of the official statements of the various groups, although there may be individuals who do not always conform in practice.[5]

---

[5] To be true to the Mennonite character, scripture references should have been given to support and show the derivation of the doctrines and principles stated in this chapter. However the various books on doctrine as well as confessions and constitutions published by the various branches do this so adequately that the reader is referred to them instead. The best exposition of Mennonite teachings and principles is the one to be found in *Doctrines of the Bible,* edited by Daniel Kauffman, published by the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., 1928.

Part II

EARLY SETTLEMENTS IN ILLINOIS

CHAPTER VII

THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Having centered interest in the Mennonites of Illinois, it will be of value to have some information about that state as a background to Mennonite history proper.

The general form of the state is that of a cone with its apex toward the south. Its location and its importance as an agricultural state have caused some to declare it the heart of the nation. Its boundary line is very irregular, being formed by the Mississippi River on the west, the Ohio on the south, and the Wabash on the southeast. From the mouth of the Wabash it follows a straight line separating it from Indiana, to Lake Michigan. On the north it is separated from Wisconsin by the parallel north latitude forty-two degrees and thirty minutes. Within these boundaries are 56,000 square miles, or 35,840,000 acres of land and 650 square miles of water surface. The extreme length and breadth of the state, are respectively, 385 and 218 miles. This embraces a larger territory than all of the New England states exclusive of Maine, or an area larger than England. Considering its size, it is one of the most level states in the Union. The lowest elevation is 350 feet above sea level, while the highest point is only 1150 feet.

The general surface of the state is smooth, being broken occasionally by a small wooded area or bluff along the rivers. More forests are found in the extreme northern and southern parts. The rich soil is evenly distributed over almost every part of the state, the richest being in Peoria County. The early settlers shunned the Illinois prairies because of the lack of shade and water and because of the pestiferous flies. However, they were rejecting the best body of farm lands to be found in the United States. The original prairies were very beautiful. Being uniformly fertile, they produced an abundance of grass and wild-flowers.

Illinois is not lacking in mineral wealth. The first coal discovered in the United States was in Illinois in 1679. One-third of the territory of Illinois is underlaid with this valuable mineral. Great quantities of fire clay and kaolin clay can be found in different localities. Besides these resources, the state also contains peat beds, limestone, sandstone, lead and iron.[1]

The northern part of the state is in the same latitude as Massachusetts, while the southern portion is the same as Virginia. Since it is so far from mountain ranges, there is no barrier to stop the hot, southerly winds of summer or the cold, northerly blasts of winter. The temperature varies to wide extremes throughout the year. The summers are those of Italy and the winters those of Sweden. The average temperature for the entire year is about fifty degrees. But the variations for any one season are considerable. For instance, one week of winter may be like the spring, and the week following, the coldest and stormiest of the season. The coldest day in Illinois was January 28, 1873, when the temperature fell to forty degrees below. The opposite extreme was reached on July 17, 1887, with a temperature of one hundred and four degrees. These temperatures are more severe on account of the abundance of moisture in the atmosphere. The average rainfall is about forty inches. The temperature is slightly on the increase, while the rainfall is very slowly decreasing. Storms are quite frequent. Tornadoes have swept through the southern part of the state and have caused considerable damage to property and killed scores of people.

---

[1] Mennonites were not affected by the mineral wealth, because they came to Illinois for the sole purpose of engaging in general farming.

The state has no real lakes, but two hundred and eighty-eight streams of various sizes. Of the rivers, the Illinois is the longest. It is formed by the junction of the Des Plaines and the Kankakee rivers and flows southwest until it empties into the Mississippi forty miles north of St. Louis. Some of the other larger rivers are the Rock, Kaskaskie, Sangamon, Fox, Vermilion, and Spoon. Many of these rivers have been declared navigable, but the Illinois is the only one that has proven of practical use for navigation.

The native flora of the state is very numerous. It varies from the deciduous cypress and cane of the South to the juniper and tamarack of the North. There are eighty-three varieties of trees found in the state in contrast to the thirty-four in Europe. Several varieties of oak, hickory, ash, maple, and walnut abound. There also appear the tulip, cucumber, beech, birch, sassafras, catalpa, elm, poplar, redbud, cypress, pecan, sycamore, cottonwood, and hackberry. Among the wild fruit-trees are to be found the persimmon, pawpaw, haw, thorn-apple, crab, mulberry, cherry and the plum. Besides, there is a great variety of grapes. Within this state, the great cereals, corn and wheat, find a congenial home and high culture.[2]

The native fauna of Illinois was equally plentiful, which justified the Indian in calling it his "Happy Hunting Ground." There roamed at large and in great numbers the wolf, wildcat, panther, bear, deer, stag, hind, buffalo, and the wild fowl, swans, geese, ducks, and turkeys. But these have disappeared entirely. A stray wolf or flock of wild geese is a great curiosity. The mink, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, opossum, and pigeon are still represented in small numbers.

---

[2] It was this fact which attracted Mennonites to the state of Illinois.

The farmers of the state, for the most part, engage in general farming. Their most important crops consist of corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, clover, alfalfa, and timothy hay. Some of the crops that are being introduced on a large scale are peas and sweet corn, which are raised to supply the canneries which are located in various sections of the country. Dairying is an important industry in the northern part of the state, the largest condensery in the world being located there. Truck gardening is very profitable in some localities, many of them furnishing Chicago with her vegetables. Cattle, hogs, sheep, horses, and chickens are the most important animals found on the farms. All this results in making Illinois one of the greatest agricultural states in the Union.[3]

During the period from 1673 to 1720 the "country of the Illinois" was inhabited by seven different tribes of Indians; namely, the Illinois,[4] Miamis, Kickapoos—(in cluding the Mascoutins), Pottawatomies, Sacs, Foxes, and Shawnees. The Illinois confederated tribe of Indians was divided into five different sub-tribes, called the Kaskaskias, Cahokias, Tamaroas, Peorias, and the Mitchigamies—the latter being those from whom Lake Michigan was named. The Illinois Indians, possessing the finest territory in the country, were attacked from all sides by other tribes who wished to gain control of this valuable land. The Iroquois

---

[3] Illinois has remained primarily an agricultural state in spite of the large industrial development in the Chicago area.

[4] This name, generally taken to mean "superior men," was given to this confederate tribe of Indians and their territory by the French, who, as the name would indicate, held this particular tribe in high esteem for their manliness.

Indians were their worst enemies. When the French missionaries came, they made friends with the Illinois and even intermarried. A great many Illinois allied themselves with the French and fought side by side with them. When the French villages in the Illinois country came into the possession of the British, these Indians allied themselves with the cause of Great Britain. But shortly afterward they were easily persuaded to join themselves with the Americans.

The history of Illinois is usually divided into six periods.

During the first period of possession by the white man, Illinois was claimed by France. Her missionaries explored the country, started trading posts, and made friends with the Indians. Jean Nicolet discovered Lake Michigan and made friends with all the Indian tribes west of it. It is said that he opened the door of the Northwest. In 1673 Joliet and Marquette made their first explorations in Illinois. In 1680 LaSalle built the first fort made by white men in Illinois near Peoria. After that the French built many forts along the rivers, one of the strongest among them being Fort Chartres on the Mississippi. In 1717 the Illinois country which had been governed as part of Canada was incorporated in the government of Louisiana. New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi were ceded to Spain. This was a blow to the French hopes in Illinois after 1761. The victories of the British in Canada forced France to give up her territory in North America. Fort Chartres in Illinois was the last place upon this continent to fly the French flag.

The British found many obstructions in their way when they went to take possession of the Illinois country. The Indians had made friends with the French and despised the British, so they were not disposed to be ruled by these newcomers. This is what is known as the second period. Nearly all the French settlers, refusing to tolerate their new Protestant rulers, moved across the Mississippi or to New Orleans. The settlement of this country and grants of land to individuals were opposed by the loyal servants of the British Crown who lived east of the Alleghenies. They thought that this trans-Allegheny country would develop, establish its own industries, and then fight for independence.

The third period, or that under Virginia, was during the Revolutionary War, 1778-1784. Virginia claimed the Illinois country by virtue of ancient charters. During the Revolution Colonel George Rogers Clark led an expedition against the forts in Illinois and captured Kaskaskia and Fort Gage. He also had the difficult task of enlisting the Indians upon the American side, which he successfully accomplished because of his clever manner of making negotiations. In the winter of 1779 Colonel Clark marched his troops across swamps to Vincennes and took the fort unconditionally. Illinois was considered a county of Virginia at this time, and Colonel John Todd was appointed the first commandant of it.

The fourth period was that under the rule of the United States, 1784-1818. The Ordinance of 1787 provided that section sixteen of every township should be used for school purposes. During 1788 St. Clair was the first territorial governor.

When, in 1809, the Illinois territory was separated from the Indiana territory, Ninian Edwards was appointed its first governor. He found the people divided into parties and cliques, as in the older communities. On June 6, 1809, the governor and judges, forming themselves into a legislative body, created a code of laws for the territory. The first general election was held in October, 1812. At this election Shadrach Bond was selected as the first delegate to Congress.

During this period large stores which sold their goods both wholesale and retail were opened at Kaskaskia and Cahokia. They engaged in trade with New Orleans and Pittsburg.

Rev. James Smith, a Baptist minister, preached the first Protestant sermon in Illinois in 1787. The first baptism was administered by Rev. Joseph Dodge in 1794.

The fifth period was that under the first constitution, 1818-1848. In 1818 Illinois, with a population of 35,000, was formed into a state, and Shadrach Bond was elected the first governor of the state. The first capital was located at Kaskaskia but soon afterwards it was changed to Vandalia. In 1839, the present capitol at Springfield was built. During 1831-32 occurred the Black Hawk War, which was a blot on United States military history because of the ruthless manner in which the whites slaughtered the Indians. The war started with raids upon the outlying settlements by the Indians under the leadership of Black Hawk. The few Mennonite settlers in Illinois at this time were however not involved in the war, since conscription was not in force, and the theatre of war was in a different area.[5] It was during this period that the Mormons came to Illinois from Missouri (1843). Their arrival created much excitement.[6] They caused such a stir that a mob murdered their founder and leader, Joseph Smith, and expelled the entire group a few years later.

---

[5] It will be seen that the Mennonites coming to the state of Illinois were not, in the fullest sense of the word, pioneers. Only a few Mennonites were in the state at this time. The movement to Illinois did not start until after this war when there was no longer any danger from the Indians.

[6] This is in marked contrast to the Mennonites, whose entrance into the state was scarcely noticed. The historian finds practically no reference to the latter in the official records or newspaper files. They did not come as a religious body. It was only after several families more or less accidentally located in the same community that they joined in establishing a congregation.

The sixth period was that under the present constitution.[7] The population of Illinois increased rapidly. Towns sprang up all over the state, the first settlements being grouped along the waterways. People of many religious sects emigrated from the crowded counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia and established their churches in the state. The very productive Illinois farmland induced these Easterners to set up homes for themselves in this "western" state. With this influx of population there was a demand for better transportation in Illinois. The first permanent railroad was built in 1848, and construction of new railroads has continued, until at the present time the state is covered with a net-work of these systems. Originally a few mud roads or trails had to suffice. Later the main roads were made of sand or gravel so as to stand a great amount of travel in bad weather. In the last few years the concrete highway has appeared, and within the next year or two, such highways will extend in every direction. In the early days when the farmers were far from the large trading centers, marketing was a difficult problem. They had to drive their teams long and weary miles over rough or muddy roads, frequently requiring a month's time to get to market. Today with the many improved means of transportation such as the railroad (both freight and fast express) and the motor truck on the public highways, they are able to trade with far-away centers within a day's time. Large cities have been made possible because good transportation has solved their food problems. The introduction of the railroad also supplanted the use of waterways for transportation. It was no longer necessary that the farmer settle near these waterways when he could avail himself of transportation inland as well, so he began to move out into the prairie where he found the land more productive. With the growth of the cities there has been a corresponding decrease of the rural population. City life with its associations—easy work, shorter hours, steady employment, and more pay—entices the young men from the farm.[8] The introduction of the new machinery on the farm also demands fewer hands. One man is now able to handle a much larger acreage than formerly.

---

[7] The Mennonites in no way helped to shape the political events of Illinois, for they were not in the state before 1829, and since their arrival they have played no part in civic affairs. They were to considerable extent pioneers in settling in central and northern Illinois, though their numbers were too small to have noticeable effect upon the development of the state.

Thus Illinois has grown into a modern commonwealth, being one of the leading states in the Union, having a population of 6,485,280 (1920) and containing the fourth largest city in the world—Chicago.[9]

---

[8] Mennonite youth, as yet, have been little affected by this enticement but it tends to increase yearly.

[9] The material for this chapter was obtained from Moses, *Illinois, Historical and Statistical,* Fergus Printing Co., Chicago, 1895. Parrish, *Historic Illinois,* A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1906. *Centennial History of Illinois,* Illinois Centennial publications, Springfield, 1920.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CREEK SETTLEMENTS OF THE AMISH

First Period 1829-1852

The Mennonites did not come to Illinois in large groups. Their coming, which was unsystematic, was not a colonization movement. They did not come to establish the Mennonite faith on Illinois soil. Instead their object was very practical, that is, to gain a livelihood from that soil. First a few happened to come. When these reported favorably, a few more decided to try out the land. As the settlers preferred the creeks and the timberlands to the prairies, the first settlements were made on the banks of the Illinois River in the region of present-day Peoria. From here the newcomers settled along the tributaries of the Illinois, the Bureau, Partridge and Ten Mile creeks and the Mackinaw River and its branches, Dillon and Rock creeks, this last being the region where the three pioneer Amishmen took up their claims.

The first Mennonites to settle in the state were representatives of the Amish wing of the denomination.[1] An effort will be made to trace the sequence of events connected with their arrival.

Soon after the Amish branch came into being in Switzerland and Alsace at the end of the seventeenth century, the Amish began to migrate elsewhere also. The first immigrant to America may have come as early as 1720 but the real movement to the United States began about 1730 or later and extended until past the middle of the century. The Zug brothers arrived in Philadelphia in

---

[1] See Chapter III, p. 31 ff. Also see maps at the end of the volume.

1742; Peter Jutzy in 1744; Jacob Hartzler in 1749 and Nicholas Stoltzfus in 1756. Most of these Amish came from the Palatinate and Alsace-Lorraine. There is little known of the early history of these Amish other than that they settled in eastern Pennsylvania. They erected no church building, but worshipped rather in private houses. Some characteristic names are Yoder, Zook, Stutzman, Koenig or King, Kauffman, Jutzi, Mast, and Troyer. These names were later also to be found in Illinois.

The first Amish settlement west of Pittsburgh was made in the state of Ohio at Sugarcreek in Tuscarawas County by Preacher Jacob Miller who came from Somerset County Pa., in 1808. Settlements were made in Holmes, Logan, Champaign, and Geauga Counties in Ohio and also Elkhart and Lagrange Counties in northern Indiana by 1850. These new colonies were started by the Amish already in America, chiefly descendants of the Pennsylvania stock.

New blood came from Alsace-Lorraine and Southern Germany in the Amish immigration from 1820-1860. Christian Augspurger, the pioneer from near Strasburg, Alsace-Lorraine, came to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1817. The next year he continued west across the Alleghenies, down the Ohio River and up the Miami to what is now Butler County. Having returned to Alsace-Lorraine he again came to America in 1819, this time bringing with him thirty-six other families, five of whom accompanied him west. All located in Butler County, Ohio. From 1819 to 1830 the Imhoffs, Nofsingers, Kennels, Strubhars, Preacher Christian Reeser, Nicholas Maurer, Peter Maurer, and Peter Stuckey, all from Alsace-Lorraine, were added to the settlement.

In addition to these Amish, a group of Mennonites came to Butler County from Hesse, Germany in 1832. Some of the family names were Jutzi, Hooley, Kinsinger, Nofsinger, Brenneman, Kennel, Gingerich, Sommer, Donner, Schoenbeck, Birkey, and Schertz. Since these Hessians were more liberal—they wore buttons on their clothes and made use of musical instruments—they soon disagreed with the Amish. A definite division was created in 1835, the Amish being led by Preacher Jacob Augspurger and the Hessians by "Apostle" Peter Nafziger. Both groups furnished settlers for central Illinois. In addition, other territories in Europe—Alsace-Lorraine, Hesse, the Palatinate, Bavaria, Baden and Switzerland—contributed settlers. Pennsylvania and other counties in Ohio also furnished some colonists.

The first Amish came to the central part of Illinois, including the counties of McLean, Woodford, Tazewell and Livingston. Peter Maurer is the first of whom there is any record.[2] He came from Alsace to Butler County, Ohio, in 1827, and in 1829 came to McLean County, Illinois. In 1830 two young men, John Strubhar[2a] and Nicholas Maurer, walked all the way from Butler County to McLean County. The former took a claim and settled in what is now Danvers Township, while the latter took a claim a mile north of Congerville. These three are the first Amish or Mennonites to be found in Central Illinois and the first Amish to be found west of the state of Ohio. From 1832 to 1850 most of the Illinois Amish arrived.

In the spring of 1831 a small company of young men and women, most of them unmarried, arrived on the banks of the Illinois near what is now Wesley City, Tazewell County, and began settlement. These pioneers had come from Alsace-Lorraine the year before and had reached the Illinois country by way of Pennsylvania, then down the Ohio, up the Mississippi and Illinois rivers as far as Fort Clark, now Peoria. This company included David Schertz, a miller, and his father; Christian Roggy with three daughters; Joseph Rusche and two sisters; Jacob Auer and Peter Beck. They were the first direct European Mennonite immigrants.

---

[2] The first white settler between Peoria and Chicago was a Mr. Blaylock in the Partridge Creek region in 1819, just a decade earlier.

[2a] For contradictory data see Appendix I.

About the same time other immigrants from Alsace began to settle about ten miles farther up the river, along Partridge Creek, between Spring Bay and what is now Metamora. During the year, "Red" Joe Belsley purchased a farm in the bottom lands of the Illinois, near Spring Bay, and John Engle, who had spent several years in Pennsylvania on his way westward, established his home near the eastern edge of the Illinois river's wooded belt, one mile west of Metamora. In 1833 several additions were made to the Partridge settlement. Christian Engle, father of John; Peter Engle, his half-brother, and several Engle sisters, with John and Joe Virkler settled near Metamora. "Black" Joe Belsley, Christian Smith, and John Kennel settled near Spring Bay that same year. To the Wesley City colony were added that year Peter Guth, John Sweitzer, and Joseph Summer.

Up to this time the colony had been without a minister, so no regular church service could be held, but after the arrival of Christian Engle in 1833, a bishop ordained in Europe, and the first Amish bishop or minister in the state, a church was organized with nine members in 1833, in the home of John Engle. This was the first German church in the state and the second church of any denomination to be organized in Woodford County.[8]

The colony grew rapidly. In 1834 settlement was made on the Mackinaw River by Peter Farni at Farniville, one of the oldest towns in the county. In this same year came also the Ropps, some of the Schertzes, and

---

[8] This was originally the one general congregation for all the immigrants, but as the settlement was enlarged, new congregations were formed out of it. Then it was known as the Partridge congregation. At the present time it continues its existence as the Metamora Amish-Mennonite Church. See Book II, Chap. XXI.

Michael Moseman, who was a few years later to become one of the leading bishops. Each year new immigrants came from Alsace-Lorraine, Bavaria, or occasionally from Hesse-Darmstadt, at first by way of Pennsylvania and the Ohio River, but later by way of New Orleans and the Mississippi. Between 1834 and 1850 in addition to those already mentioned came the ancestors of those families now bearing the names Schertz, Bachman, Garber, Naffziger, Litwiller, Esch, Yordy, Burkey, Zehr, Slagel, Summer, Oyer, Ropp, Springer, Guth, Sweitzer, Belsley, Albrecht, Camp, Imhoff, Rediger, and several others. By 1840 the settlement extended along Black Partridge Creek from Spring Bay to Metamora;—along Ten Mile Creek from Peoria to Washington; — along Dillon Creek in Tazewell County;—along the Mackinaw River in Woodford County;—and along Rock Creek in McLean County.

In the meantime a few families had also settled in Putnam County on the banks of the Illinois. In 1835 a Burkey family from Butler County, Ohio, settled near Hennepin. The next year several others by the name of Burkey came from Bavaria. These were followed in 1837 by the Albrechts from the same place, Hooleys and Brennemans from Ohio; others from Germany came later. In 1838, the Albrechts moved across the river into Bureau County, near Tiskilwa. Others followed, and soon the entire colony had moved across.[4] For a while the congregation was in charge of Bishop Andrew Ropp from the Dillon Creek congregation, but later Joseph Burkey was ordained as the resident bishop.

For several years after the first pioneers arrived, the various settlements in Woodford and Tazewell counties formed but one congregation, and all-day services were held on alternate Sundays in private houses in each locality in turn. A lunch was served at the noon hour. It was not an uncommon thing for members to drive fifteen or twenty miles to attend church. As the colony grew, separate congregations were organized in the several centers of the settlement. About 1837, Michael Moseman was ordained and placed in charge of the newly-formed Wesley City congregation known as the "Busche Gemein." A few years later Moseman was made bishop.[5]

---

[4] This developed into the present Willow Springs Amish-Mennonite congregation, near Tiskilwa. See Book II, Chap. XXVI.

About the same time (1837), the settlement at Dillon Creek was given a separate organization,[6] and placed in charge of Andrew Ropp, who was appointed bishop about 1840. He faithfully served his people in that capacity for more than fifty years.

The settlement on the Mackinaw between Dillon Creek on the west and Rock Creek on the east, became known as the "Mackinaw Meeting."[7] In 1840 Christian Ropp was ordained to the ministry, and about 1846 he was elected one of the first bishops over that part of the church. Doubtless he played some part in organizing the Yoder church, mentioned below.

Thus, by 1840, the Partridge, the Wesley City, the Dillon Creek, and the Mackinaw congregations had been formed. The first bishops of these respective congregations—Christian Engle, Michael Moseman, Andrew Ropp, and Christian Ropp—all were ordained before 1840.

A settlement was made in 1835 and 1836 in Bureau County by Amish immigrants who came directly from Bavaria, Germany. The history of this settlement is given later in the history of the Willow Springs congregation at Tiskilwa.

---

[5] This is the congregation which developed into the present Defenseless Mennonite (Egly) church near Groveland. See Book III, Chap. XXXVIII.

[6] The congregation is now known as the Pleasant Grove Amish-Mennonite church near Tremont. See Book II, Chap. XXIV.

[7] The Mackinaw meeting was later divided and the divisions have developed into the present Roanoke and Goodfield Amish-Mennonite congregations. See Book II, Chaps., XXII and XXIII respectively.

The early settlers thus far mentioned had come from Europe, but between 1848 and 1852, several families from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania,—Lantz, Troyer, Yoder, Kauffman, settled on the wild prairies near the present town of Danvers, and along Rock Creek. With them came Jonathan Yoder. Joseph Stuckey came from Butler County, Ohio. At first these people worshipped with the Mackinaw meeting, but in 1851 they organized their own congregation which, due to the leadership of Jonathan Yoder, was known as the Yoder Church.[8]

These Amish who settled here were "Old Order"[9] in their customs, for at that time they were strictly plain in their dress.[10]

Many of the early immigrants into Illinois were young men. They were often the oldest sons, who came to test the country or to earn enough money to send for the remainder of the family. Frequently they would first land in Pennsylvania, remain a few years, and then proceed westward to Illinois, or perhaps spend some time in Butler County, Ohio, before coming. Many of the later arrivals came by way of Butler County. The earliest route of travel was by way of Pennsylvania, the Ohio river, the

---

[8] After the death of Jonathan "Yony" Yoder in 1889, Joseph Stuckey became the leading bishop of the Yoder Church, which in time was relocated and known as the Stuckey Church. It was the original church of the "Stuckey Amish" or Central Conference of Mennonites. At present it is referred to as the North Danvers Mennonite Church. See Book IV, Chaps., XLIX, L.

[9] It is interesting to note that while several branches were formed from these early settlements that there remained no group which adhered to the "Old Order." The Old Order in the state at present are of a later settlement who located elsewhere and never had any relation to this group. See Book V, Chap. LV, "The Arthur Settlement."

[10] For further description of early customs and conditions then practised by both Amish and Mennonites, see next chapter, "The Mennonites come to Illinois."

Mississippi and then up the Illinois. But those who came after 1840 avoided the overland route through Pennsylvania by coming direct to New Orleans and thence up the Mississippi.[11]

Autobiography of a Pioneer

To furnish an idea of the method of coming to Illinois and the early struggles on arrival, the translation of Christian Ropp's autobiography written Sept. 15, 1892, is given here: "I, Christian Ropp, now an old man of nearly eighty years, at the request of my children, will attempt to write a brief account of my life. I will begin with my father. He was one of three orphan children. They had inherited a flour mill and a hemp mill but this they lost before they grew up. Then my dear father was compelled to hire himself to strangers until he was twenty-eight years of age, when he was married to Elizabeth Eiman. His brother died, and his sister married one Zimmerman, whose Christian name I have forgotten.

"My father lived in upper Alsace about six miles from Basel, and two miles from Altkirch, and five miles from Befford. And since he had heard many favorable reports of America, he thought it might be better for himself and children to emigrate to America, than to see his sons drafted into the army, for he had at that time six sons. [It is uncertain whether Befford should be Belfort.]

---

[11] At the outset I resolved to be very thorough in gathering pioneer facts. I did a great amount of research in county records, county histories, old newspapers, old letters, early church literature, tombstones and numerous interviews. But I was unable except in a few instances, to go beyond what Dr. C. Henry Smith had already recorded. I rediscovered much that in the main tallied with the known. Most of the foregoing part of the chapter is from Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 228 ff., and *Mennonite Year Book and Directory,* 1907, p. 18. In addition I made some use of William B. Weaver's notes which he was very kind to loan me. He, at present the pastor of the North Danvers Central Conference Mennonite church near Danvers, Illinois, has published a history of the Central Conference of Mennonites.

"He lived at this time upon a small farm in upper Alsace, called 'Barthel Hutte,' two miles from Altkirch, two miles from Damerkirch and five from Befford. It was in the year 1826, at a time when many people were leaving for America, that my parents decided to go also. In May, 1826, the long voyage to America began. We journeyed from Befford to Paris and Havre, where we had to wait for a number of days. We had our own horse and wagon, but here had to sell the horse.

"We entered the ship, but soon most of us were seasick. My mother was seasick most of the time. We met with some stormy weather. We also caught a large fish with a hook, which pleased me very much. We were on ship forty days.

"After we reached Philadelphia, my father hired a team to take us to Lancaster County. After we had gone thirty or thirty-five miles, we stopped over with an old Amishman by the name of Zuck. Here we remained a number of days to arrange our affairs. Then my father bought a horse, and after setting up the wagon which we had brought with us, we started out again, for my father wished to go to Butler County, Ohio.

"When we came within six miles of Lancaster, we met a Mennonite by the name of John König who was plowing along the roadside. When he saw my father, he knew him by his clothing as well as his beard, for at that time no one except our people wore beards. After speaking with him, he invited him to remain over night, but my father hesitated, since there were others also with us who were on their way to Ohio. But finally my father was persuaded to remain all night, and as they were talking together during the evening, König told him of Canada, and that many were now going to that place, and that each family was offered fifty acres free.

"As three families were about to leave for Canada, my father decided to go with them. The names of our fellow-travelers were Christian Farni, John Erb, Michael Swartz, and Zehr. After a six weeks' stay in Pennsylvania, we left with the above-mentioned for Canada.

"My father bought his second horse, but after making about half of the journey, the horse became sick and had to be left behind. Then we had to do some walking. It was a long and tedious journey. The road at that time was bad. We were on the way more than three weeks, but finally in the fall we reached Waterloo Township.

"We remained all night in a little village called Rumbletown, now Berlin (Kitchener). Then my father went to Wilmot Township, where the free land was to be had, and selected a lot along the middle street. The conditions were to pay nine dollars for surveying, and to clear two rods along the street; and then the fifty acres were free. There were two hundred acres in a lot; the other hundred and fifty could be bought later for $2.50 per acre.

"Then we built a little log cabin and moved into it the same fall. But now our money was all gone. We had to hire out as laborers in order to make a living, Andrew and I; but wages were very low. I received only $2.50 per month and wore out more boots and clothes than I earned.

"In the spring we cleared some land and planted potatoes and garden vegetables. Then things went somewhat better, for we were supplied with food. And then each year we fared a little better. We finally cleared forty acres.

"But now several of our number decided to move to Ohio, for it was too cold in Canada. These were the following: Joseph Goldschmidt, Peter Danner, Daniel Unzicker, Peter Nafziger, and several others. And since my brother Andrew had cut his foot so that he had been disabled for six months, he decided to accompany this group; so in 1831 he left for Ohio.

"In 1832 we held a sale, and moved to Ohio, but I and my brother Jacob remained to collect our sale money. In 1833 my brother Andrew returned to help collect the money, for in Canada money was very scarce at that time. We then sold our property and collected about $1100.

"In 1833 we left for Ohio. There were four of us, I and Andrew and Jacob, and Christian Lehman. We had a horse and covered wagon. The journey was tedious. We were on our way seventeen days, and at one time came near being robbed, but by the help of Divine Providence we escaped. We finally reached Ohio, where we found all well; and we rejoiced greatly.

"But since land was high here, and hearing that land was still cheap in Illinois and that eight families from Germany had already settled there, we decided to move to Illinois. The names of those settlers were Peter Engel, David Schertz, John Schweitzer, Peter Roggy, John Auer, ——— Gingerich, and Peter Beck.

"In the fall of 1833 my brother Andrew journeyed to Illinois to see the land. He was well pleased and returned immediately for the rest of us. Since it was late in the year, we decided that the family should remain in Ohio until the following spring, but I and Andrew started early in January, 1834, for Illinois. We went on horseback and were thirteen days on the way, since the roads were very poor. We had to ride around many swamps and were often at a loss to know how to cross streams, for at that time there were few bridges. We arrived in Woodford County at the home of Peter Engel. Here my brother Andrew married Jacobine Wirkler.

"In the spring we moved over to the Mackinaw, and took up a claim, for at that time the land had not yet been put on the market. We cleared about ten acres. During this time our dear mother died in 1834 of consumption and was buried in Butler County, Ohio. But my father and the rest of the family came to us in Illinois in the spring. Christian Farni from Canada also came to us. Then we lived together until after harvest, when we were all taken sick with the "Schüttel-fieber" (ague). Then we sold our claim for $200 to Fritz Niergarth and moved back to Metamora, to Peter Engel's.

"Soon after, my brother moved to Pleasant Grove, but we moved over in the timber between Washington, Illinois, and Peoria. Here my father lived for a number of years on a claim, but it was finally taken from him. But I lived with my brother Andrew and built a blacksmith shop and worked at the trade.

"In 1836 I married Magdalene Schertz, and moved to Mackinaw and hired to Christian Farni for five months for $20 per month. Then I bought eighty acres of land, and built a log cabin on it. Now I had to see that I made a livelihood, for the times were hard and money scarce. I lived on the Mackinaw for twenty-two years and passed through many experiences. Since April, 1858, we have been living in McLean County, Illinois some thirty years, and have seen much and passed through trying experiences."[12]

The following is a list[13] of Amish with a few Mennonites in the order which they settled in the state during this period:

1829	
Peter Maurer and Family	Rock Creek
1830	
John Strubhar	Rock Creek
Nicholas Maurer	Mackinaw

---

[12] Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 479 ff.

[13] *Ibid,* p. 498 ff., with some changes and additions.

1831	
David and Joseph Schertz	Wesley City
Joe Rusche and Sons	Wesley City
Christian Roggy and Daughters	Wesley City
Peter Beck	Wesley City
Joseph Auer	Wesley City
"Red" Joseph Belsley	Partridge
John Engel	Partridge
1833	
"Black" Joe Belsley	Partridge
John Verkler	Partridge
Joe Verkler and Sisters	Partridge
Peter Engel, Sr.	Partridge
Peter Nafziger	Partridge
Christian Engel and Daughters	Partridge
Christian Smith	Partridge
John Kennel	Partridge
Andrew Ropp	Wesley City
Joseph Summer	Wesley City
John Schweitzer	Wesley City
Peter Guth	Wesley City
Benjamin Kindig (Menn.), son David	Holland's Grove
1834	
Joe Schertz	Partridge
Peter Schertz (Bro. to Joe)	Partridge
Christian Birkey	Partridge
Joe Schertz	Peoria (Ft. Clark)
John Detweiler	Peoria (Ft. Clark)
Michael Moseman	Wesley City
Christian Ropp	Wesley City
Christian Farni	Mackinaw
Peter Farni	Mackinaw
1835	
Joe Engel	Partridge
Christian Schlegel	Ten Mile Creek
Daniel Burckey	Hennepin
Christian Burckey	Hennepin
Frederick Burckey	Hennepin
1836	
George Summer	Partridge
Christian Nafziger	Partridge
Joseph Ropp	Dillon Creek
Benjamin Rediger	Peoria
John Burckey and sons	Hennepin

1837

Michael Belsley and son Christ	Partridge
Peter Nafziger	Partridge
Joe Schertz	Partridge
David Schertz (son of Joe) (father of Joe and Peter)	Partridge
John Nafziger	Partridge
Christian Nafziger	Partridge
Christian Esch	Partridge
Peter Ropp	Dillon Creek
Jacob Unsicker	Dillon Creek
Jacob Nafziger	Peoria
Henry Detweiler	Peoria
Christian Detweiler and mother	Peoria
Christ Schertz (bro. to Peoria Joe)	Peoria
Andrew Schertz	Peoria
John Schertz	Peoria
Peter Schertz	Peoria
John Graybill	Peoria
Jost Balley (Menn.)	Ten Mile
Peter Hartman (Menn.)	Holland's Grove
Christian Albrecht	Bureau Creek
Joseph Ioder and sons	Bureau Creek
Peter Roggy	Bureau Creek
Valentine and Peter Strubhar and mother	Rock Creek
Michael Kinsinger	Rock Creek
Jacob Danner	Rock Creek
Peter Danner	Rock Creek

1838

Peter Ulrich	Partridge
Joe Rediger	Partridge
Joe Garber	Mackinaw

1839

Andrew Bachman	Partridge
(and son Joe and daughters)	Partridge
Christian Ackerman	Partridge
Peter Yorte	Partridge
John Gingrich (with sons and daughters)	Partridge
John Nafziger	Partridge
Christian Strubhar	Rock Creek

1840	
Joe Garber	Partridge
Christ Garber	Partridge
Peter Garber	Partridge
Christ Yorte	Partridge
Martin Lapp (Menn.)	Stephenson Co.
Samuel Lapp (Menn.)	Stephenson Co.
1841	
Christ, John, Andrew, Jacob, Valentine and Joe Burkey (big Burkeys)	Dillon Creek
Benjamin Rediger, Jr.	Peoria
1842	
Peter Litwiller	Dillon Creek
Ben Kauffman (Menn.)	Holland's Grove
Henry Musselman (Menn.)	Jo Daviess Co.
Michael Kistler (Menn.)	Rock Creek
Michael King	Mackinaw
Christian King	Mackinaw
Dan King	Mackinaw
Jacob Baer (Menn.)	Summerfield
1843	
——— Bernhard	Mackinaw
Daniel Zehr	Partridge
Jacob Pletcher (Menn.)	Summerfield
1844	
Christian Baer (Menn.)	Summerfield
John Brubaker (Menn.)	Stephenson Co.
Godfrey Groff (Menn.)	Stephenson Co.
1846	
Joe Litwiller	Dillon Creek
Andrew Roth	Dillon Creek
1847	
Henry Nafziger	Rock Creek
Christ Zehr and Christ Ehrisman, sometime, probably early in the 40's	Rock Creek
1848	
Christian Nafziger	Dillon Creek
Daniel Roth	Dillon Creek
Nicholas Roth	Dillon Creek
Andrew Roth	Dillon Creek

Joe Heiser	Dillon Creek
Johann Bear (Menn.)	Jo Daviess Co.
Christian Martin	Wesley City
Joe Rediger	Wesley City
Joe Yoder	Rock Creek
Elias Yoder	Rock Creek
Yost Yoder	Rock Creek
Jacob Zehr	Mackinaw
1849	
David Springer	Dillon Creek
Christian Hostetler and his brothers Peter, Jacob, Joe, Christ and two sisters	Dillon Creek
Christian Danner	Rock Creek
John Lantz	Rock Creek
Nicholas Ramseyer	Rock Creek
1850	
Solomon Lantz	Rock Creek
Samuel Yoder	Rock Creek
Jacob H. Zook	Rock Creek
John Sharp & sons Peter and Jonathan	Rock Creek
Joseph Stuckey	Rock Creek
Jacob Miller	Rock Creek
John Detweiler	Rock Creek
Peter Beller	Partridge
John Klopfenstein	Mackinaw
1851	
George Zehr	Hopedale
Jonas Troyer	Rock Creek
John M. Kissler	Rock Creek
Jonathan Kauffman	Rock Creek
Jonathan Yoder	Rock Creek
Benjamin Brubaker (Menn.)	Holland's Grove
1852	
Christ Garber	Dillon Creek
Peter Garber	Dillon Creek
Jacob Leisey (Menn.)	Summerfield

CHAPTER IX

THE MENNONITES COME TO ILLINOIS

First Period 1833-1852

The preceding chapter dealt only with the Amish, but representatives from the main line of Mennonites settled in the state also.[1] Mennonites settled in Illinois even before they came to Indiana. In the spring of 1833 Benjamin Kindig, a member of the original Lancaster County Kindig family, together with his family, left his home in Augusta County, Virginia, to seek better opportunities for himself on the cheaper lands of Illinois. David Kindig with his father Benjamin came to Tazewell County in 1833, with one four-horse wagon, one three-horse wagon, and a one-horse carryall. He gives the following interesting account.

"We started for Holland's Grove, Tazewell County, Illinois. Traveling west, we passed through the Worm and White Sulphur Springs, and crossed the Allegheny Mountains to the Ohio River, a distance of 225 miles, crossing the Big Sandy River at its mouth over into Kentucky, passing through Lexington, Frankfort, and on to Louisville on the Ohio River. Crossed the river into New Albany, Indiana, thence to Vincennes on the Wabash, thence to Vandalia, Illinois, then to Springfield, Illinois, then a small village, it being the last one we saw until we came to Peoria. We inquired for the Fort Clark road, and as we came on, we inquired for Holland's Grove.

---

[1] Only the Amish wing and the Main Line of Mennonites came to Illinois at this early date. The third wing, the Mennonites from Russia, did not appear in Illinois until after 1900 and then only in Chicago.

"We stopped on the farm where Christian Engel now lives (1893) (near the Union Cemetery) on the 22nd of October, 1833, having covered a distance of 800 miles, being on the road seven weeks, camping in our tent and wagons.

"When we came to this state in 1833 there were no Indians here, but there were many signs of where they had their wigwams, also many ladders setting up against trees in which they had cut holes to catch coons and get honey.

"The ladders were made thus: they would cut a sapling and leave the natural limbs about one and one-half feet long for hand holds, resting one end on the ground and the other against the tree.

"In speaking of Indians, when we came to Illinois, I never saw any here nor was I in the Black Hawk War. But I saw the old Indian Chief Black Hawk in Richmond, Virginia, when the tribe and officers were on their way to Washington, D. C. That was in the summer of 1833. He was tall, with a sharp keen eye, had rings in his ears, and one in his nose, and had a blanket around his shoulders, and was a fair representation of this picture."[2]

Kindig was a Mennonite and was soon followed by other families from the same region in Virginia, who, although not of the same faith at that time, were undoubtedly of Mennonite descent. Soon after, other Mennonites came. In 1837 Peter Hartman arrived from Bavaria, Germany, by way of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. From the same county came also Benjamin Kauffman, in 1842. Benjamin Brubaker arrived from Richland County, Ohio, in 1851. These were followed by families bearing the names Althaus, Hirstein and others. The first minister and bishop was one Jost Bally, who had come to Illinois very early (perhaps 1837) from Pennsylvania. These

---

[2] Extract from Kindig's journal found in Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 496 ff.

Mennonites began to meet in their homes for worship and probably organized a church in the early forties.[3]

Scales Mound

Since the Mennonite settlement made in Jo Daviess County has become extinct, it will be treated here in full.[4]

About 1840 a few families immigrated from Bavaria, Germany, to the neighborhood of Scales Mound, a little village whose present population is less than four hundred. They were followed a few years later by more, bringing the total up to eight families. Galena, the nearest town, was then larger than Chicago was. A trail ran across the open prairie connecting these two villages. A little congregation was organized, composed of Jacob Heer, John Duerrstein, Henry Musselman, Peter Neuenschwander (Neuschwanger) and others, with Johannes Baer as the minister. They met at first in a log school-house, perhaps not more than twice per month. Later a small church building was erected about four miles south of Scales Mound. The original Mennonite burying-ground near by, now called the Hammer Cemetery and used by the community, was started on the highest bluff of land when one of the Mennonite children was drowned. A little Musselman girl and her brother had started to Galena on a two-wheeled cart one winter day. On the way they had to drive through a stream, where the ice had been broken open for that purpose. In crossing, the little girl was thrown off, and the current swept her under the ice. Her body was not recovered until the next spring.

---

[3] This main line Mennonite congregation later became known as the Union Church near Washington; see Book II, Chap. XIII. Smith, *The Mennonites of America,* pp. 284, 285.

[4] Material from Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 285, correspondence with David Heer, Scales Mound, Illinois, and interviews with Christ Durrstein and Rose Durrstein of Scales Mound and Louis Durrstein, Apple River, Illinois.

At first several of the families hired a teacher to conduct a little German school three times a week at the homes. This was later replaced by the English public school.

There were no church activities. Preacher Baer, although a devoted Christian, was not a strong preacher, and lacked the vision and ability to furnish proper and adequate leadership for the struggling congregation. Consequently little progress was made. Michael Musselman was the last preacher. So many of the young people had been expelled from membership because they married outside the church that there were no more left. Many helped form and joined the Presbyterian church of the community. The last Mennonite baptismal ceremony was performed about 1878, and the church as such ceased to exist soon after. David Heer, the last member, died in November, 1923.

It is difficult to classify this congregation in relation to the other Mennonites. It never became a part of any conference. It closely resembled the church at Summerfield, and in that respect would be classed as a General Conference church. But since David Heer held an indefinite membership in the Freeport church, it might be classed with the (old) Mennonites.

It is usually pleasant to read about the beginning of settlements, states and nations. But also to read their end is rather sad. There are several of the Illinois congregations whose history is completed because they have ceased to exist. One wonders why these settlements became extinct. In the first place it is quite likely that the settlements were not planned. It just happened that a few families moved in, and then, after a sufficient number of people had accumulated, they attempted to establish a church. If a settlement is not made on a large enough scale it can scarcely perpetuate itself. Any church with less than twenty-five members is not large enough to furnish an attractive unit or life companions for the rising generation. The young people are absorbed into the surrounding community and lose their denominational identity. Often this process is augmented by a narrow leadership or by an entire lack of it. Sometimes too, the locality chosen is unfortunate, perhaps through an uncongenial class of people or poor soil.

Another settlement of Bavarians and other Germans was made a little later, from 1842 to 1860, in St. Clair County, near Summerfield. Among the earliest immigrants were Jacob Baer (1842), Jacob Pletcher (1843), Christian Baer (1844), and Jacob Leisey (1852). At this time, from about 1840, many of the German Mennonite immigrants settled in Iowa. Some of these moved to Summerfield between 1855 and 1860. Others came later from Germany, and the community has been one of the most progressive in America and has numbered among its pastors some of the ablest men in the entire church.[5]

As mentioned in the previous chapter not only had Amish come from Butler County, Ohio, but also Hessian Mennonites. Back in Ohio there had been disagreement and one could anticipate more when members of both groups came to the same community in Illinois. One of the first Hessian families to come was Peter Donner, Sr., who settled in Dry Grove Township in 1837. Following that date a number of Hessian families arrived, such as the Nafzigers, Donners, Kennels, Brennemans, Ottos, Kinsingers, Springers, and Gingerichs. In 1842 Michael Kistler of Butler County, Ohio, came to the community. He had been ordained as a minister by his father-in-law, "Apostle" Peter Nafziger in Butler County. The Hessian Mennonites, with Kistler as their minister, now began to hold services in their homes, which continued until 1852, the close of this period.[6]

---

[5] In 1861 it formed, together with three congregations in Iowa and several in the East, the General Conference of Mennonites of North America. It has ever since held an influential position in that organization. See Book V, Chap. LVIII. Also Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 285 f.

About the same time, also in the forties, a small settlement was begun in Stephenson County, near Freeport. Among the earliest families to settle at this place were those of Godfrey Groff, John Brubaker, and Martin and Samuel Lapp from Clarence Center, New York. Others came later from Canada and Pennsylvania. The first resident minister was Martin Lapp, who also later became the pioneer bishop of Missouri.[7]

About 1847 several Reformed Mennonite families from Pennsylvania settled on farms north of Sterling. Several years later they organized a church there. It is the sole congregation of the branch in the state and exists at the present time with nearly its original strength.[8]

Of these six Mennonite churches formed during this early period (1833-1852) in Illinois, the first and fifth mentioned were (old) Mennonites, the second became extinct, the third helped to initiate and joined the General Conference of Mennonites, the fourth being closely associated with the Amish, became a church of the Central Conference of Mennonites and the last was Reformed Mennonite. Unlike the Amish, the Mennonites in Illinois formed no new branches other than those planted in the state during this early period. Aside from the settlements, various families settled irregularly over the state and eventually lost their Mennonite connections.

---

[6] This group of Hessian Mennonites is mentioned again in the latter part of the next chapter where their relation to the Amish is discussed. In spite of the friction which broke out from time to time between the Hessians and the Amish they finally learned to work together. This Hessian group developed into the South Danvers Mennonite church which since its removal to town is known as the Danvers Mennonite church. This church and its original opponent, the North Danvers church were among the twelve charter congregations which formed the Central Conference of Mennonites in 1908.

[7] This congregation is the present (old) Mennonite Church near Freeport. See Book II, Chap. XIV. Also Smith, *Mennonites of America*, p. 286.

[8] See Chap. IV, section No. 12 and Book V, Chap. LVII.

Although the dangers prevalent on the frontier had passed, yet these early Amish and Mennonites had many hardships to face. They had come from their original homes to seek a living in this new country. Since land was cheap—the state sold some of its holdings as low as $2.64 per acre[9]—almost every settler purchased his farm. To bring it under cultivation was very hard work. The struggle was increased by the fact that they chose the timberland which had to be cleared instead of the open prairie.

It will be well to spend a little time here discussing what now is considered an absurd preference for the timberland when the prairie land was so much more valuable. Owing to their former environment of hills and creeks, and rivers bordered by woods, the timberland seemed the more natural. The geographic condition of the Illinois land had considerable influence. Especially central Illinois has a vast stretch of high, undulating prairie land with streams, occasional groves and belts of timber. These groves and wooded streams were preferable because the streams furnished drinking water and transportation—the highways of the early settlers. The prairies, due to lack of natural drainage were often swampy and full of flies and mosquitoes. After the first hard work of clearing the timberland it was much easier cultivated than the stiff clayey soil of the prairie. Thus confined to the timberland at first, the settlers were ignorant of the value of the prairie.

The attributes of civilization were very few in this new region. The early settlers occupied log cabins; but it was not many years before frame houses were built. Much of the furniture was home-made including the bread-baking

---

[9] This land has a present value of $250.00 to $500.00 per acre.

"dowtry" (dough-tray). The light was furnished by the home-made tallow candle and snuffed by improvised nippers. The day of the spinning wheel was past, but the cloth was purchased and made up into dresses for the women and clothing for the men. The man dressed for Sunday wore clean "overall" trousers with coat to match, and leather boots. The women wore large bonnets, capes, and long dresses. For the older women the color was often black. In many cases the "prayer-head covering," white or black, was worn constantly. It was a bonnet in shape, but made of frailer goods, having ribbons, either black or white colored, which were looped under the chin. This garb, a habit brought from former homes, was considered a religious necessity. Mennonite young people, regardless of whether they had been baptized into membership or not, usually dressed similar to their elders.

There were many handicaps in the efforts to make a living. The methods of farming were crude. Machinery had not yet made its appearance. Corn, the main crop, was planted by hand, and hoed. Prairie fires sometimes broke out, burning fences, fields of corn, and stacks of hay.

Markets were few and far away. There were no railroads. Early farmers had one hundred and twenty miles to the nearest mill which was in Indiana. Grain had to be hauled to Chicago which meant a two weeks' trip. The Amish and Mennonites introduced the first wagons so much needed for this transportation.

The settlers were forced to live a self-sustaining type of life. They subsisted on game, milk and cornflower. They made their own shoes. To purchase the necessities of life meant a long trip over territory without roads. Diseases were common, due to the prevalent sloughs and marshy prairies.

After wresting a bare living from the soil, there was little time for social or religious activities. The religious organization was indefinite. There were no meeting-houses or church property of any kind; not even cemeteries. The dead, placed in crude coffins constructed by the neighbors, were buried on their own farms. Church services consisted of a Sunday morning sermon once or twice a month in some home or barn. German or "Pennsylvania Dutch" was the sole language of pulpit and conversation. Though these settlers were honest, upright and serious-minded, religious activities had to be a secondary matter. The congregation, hardly an organic unit, performed the function of a social gathering. Aside from the bishop there was no organic connection between congregations. There was no association between the Mennonites and Amish. Geographical separation accounts for this. But in Tazewell County, where both Mennonites and Amish had settled, there was no coöperation between them. They were to each other as separate denominations. Intermarriage was forbidden. Indefinite as the church life was, yet there were formed during this period precedents and church habits, some of which were of lasting benefit, while others brought considerable harm.

But the present generation should not be unappreciative of what these early settlers accomplished. Had it not been for their courageous sacrifices it would be impossible to have the present blessings. After all, development from their foundations has been very rapid. It is only a century since the first Amish and Mennonite settlers entered the state. Yet within that time the prairies have been broken and made into garden spots. Stretches of open prairie have become happy Christian communities with church houses and religious activities.

CHAPTER X

THE SECOND PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT

1852-1866

The inactivity and apparent lifelessness of the Amish congregations in Illinois made them fertile soil for a new movement propagated by some zealous leader. This movement came in the form of the New Amish. The group, called by themselves the Christian Apostolic Church, had sprung twenty years before from a dual source in Switzerland.[1] In 1846 seven of these people came from Switzerland to Ohio, where they soon found their way to the Swiss Mennonites in Wayne County and secured a small following among them. In 1852 several more appeared among the Amish of Lewis County, New York, and won over to their faith some of the Verklers and Fahrneys and others. From here one of the Verklers and Benedict Weyeneth, one of the leaders from Switzerland, came to Woodford County, Illinois, and began proselyting among the Amish.

Their first converts were Joseph Graybill, who became their first minister in Illinois; John and Joseph Verkler, cousins of their name-sake from New York; Peter Engel, one of the earliest settlers of Woodford County, and others who had been more or less dissatisfied with the church and thus fell an easy prey to the proselyting zeal of the strangers. A small following was also gained in the Dillon Creek settlement. Graybill was a zealous devotee of the new sect and labored unceasingly to win new converts. In 1862 he went to Butler County, Ohio, and established a small church among the Amish at that place.

---

[1] See Chap. III, section No. 3.

Small congregations have since been organized in other states, but Illinois is still the stronghold of the sect. The growth at first was slow. In 1877 they numbered in all the United States only eighty-nine members. But during recent years there has been a heavy immigration from Switzerland, and now there are a number of large congregations in central Illinois, aggregating perhaps several thousand members. From their first arrival, they have gained proselytes from the Mennonites and Amish. Every now and then one goes over to their church. Two of the preachers at the Union Mennonite church near Washington joined them.

The first organized congregation was drawn out of the Partridge Amish church. The first building was erected between Roanoke and Eureka. The New Amish congregation at Morton has erected a large church house and has a larger membership than any other church of the body. Other churches in central Illinois are located at Tremont, Peoria, Princeville, Mackinaw Dells near Congerville, Goodfield, Eureka, Roanoke, between Eureka and Roanoke, Gridley, Cissna Park, and north of Forest; in all twelve congregations. Some of these church houses are splendid brick structures.

They have had a schism in their ranks. The progressive branch has a church at Tremont and another at Peoria.

The church activity consists of an all-day, but no evening, Sunday service. Both the English and German languages are used. Singing is from a book which they had printed recently in Philadelphia. Dinner is served at the church. Many adults who have been reared in the church continue to attend although they do not join. They have no Sunday schools. Aside from an Old Ladies' Home in Peoria they support no charities. They hold no conferences, although there are occasional conjoint meetings between two or more of the congregations. Sometimes an elders' and preachers' meeting is held. The first Illinois elder was Benedict Weyeneth, referred to above, who came from Switzerland by way of Ohio to Illinois just before the Civil War. They have no church literature, except that occasionally one of the sermons is put into typewritten form and passed around.

In doctrine and practice this sect has been influenced somewhat by the fact that many of its earliest adherents came from the ranks of the Amish. They are thoroughly non-resistant, and have nothing to do with civil government. In dress they are extremely plain, but as a result of Swiss influence the women are permitted to wear plain hats instead of bonnets. In doctrine, however, they differ in several respects from the Amish. They baptize by immersion and observe the practice of feetwashing, although not in connection with the communion service. They are very exclusive and have as little business and social relation with others as possible. Religious associations with other churches they forbid. They resent any suggestion of Mennonite connections and strenuously deny any relation to that body. They are opposed to having their history recorded. The historian finds it impossible to gather any information from them. They are forbidden by the rules of their organization to listen to preaching, praying, offering grace at meals, or any other religious exercise performed by one not of their faith. For that reason they never attend the funeral services of even their nearest relatives or friends if such service is in charge of a "foreigner." The mourners do not sit together at funerals.

They make free use of the ban[2] in their religious discipline, and insist on a rigid application of the practice of

---

[2] The ban or excommunication is the expulsion of a member from church for failing to obey some doctrine of that church. "Shunning" is ostracism of the excommunicated by his former brother-members. This shunning is carried to the extent of refusing to talk,

"shunning" such as are expelled. This practice shuts out an expelled member from all business, social and religious association with his former fellow-members. Frequently the ban completely disrupts the domestic relations of the family. Husband and wife are not even permitted to eat at the same table when one or the other has been excommunicated. The practice has worked havoc in a number of families in central Illinois. Several notorious cases have given the New Amish within recent years considerable notoriety, and have called forth a great deal of unfavorable criticism throughout the State.[3] However it should be said that these unfortunate cases do not fairly characterize the normal life of the group which is as happy and successful as that of their neighbors if not more so.

The New Amish disturbance, though tragic in that it proselyted some of the members, nevertheless served to arouse the churches in central Illinois. Also enough time had elapsed so that the early settlers, having become better established, could give a little more attention to church activity. In 1853 the Rock Creek church, in which Jonathan ("Yony") Yoder was bishop, and which had been organized out of the Mackinaw Settlement in 1851, had built its meeting-house. It was situated about ten rods north of what is now Rock Creek Fair Ground, four miles north of Danvers, Illinois. This building, called the Rock Creek Meeting House or Yoder Church was a plain structure, with no steeple, no cushioned seats, but ample in interior space and warmth. It was the first Amish or Men-

---

eat or transact business with the "sinner," even including domestic relations of husband and wife. Ideally it is supposed to be an act of love to bring the erring one to his senses but frequently it becomes a form of punishment. Jacob Amman's insistence upon a more strict observance of the practise caused the Amish split. The New Amish have inherited and retained the practise with the Jacob Amman intensity.

[3] Chiefly from Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 244 ff., and some miscellaneous material from interviews.

nonite meeting-house in the state and possibly one of the very first among the Amish anywhere west of Pennsylvania.[4]

The Hessian Mennonites near Danvers, who had been worshiping in their homes under their preacher Michael Kistler, now began to meet with Jonathan Yoder and his congregation in the new church house. Kistler and his people, having brought with them from Europe many religious practices and customs at variance with those of their brethren from Alsace and in America, soon found themselves out of harmony, especially with that part of the congregation which had come from conservative Mifflin County. "Yony" Yoder and Kistler represented the two extremes of Amish and Mennonite practice of that day. The former coolly excommunicated the latter. Accordingly about 1854 the Hessians formed a separate congregation, as their countrymen had done in Butler County some time earlier, and in 1863 built what is known as the South Danvers Mennonite church.[5]

The Partridge congregation, (sometimes referred to as Spring Bay), erected its brick meeting-house in 1854. From this time on, the settlement gradually moved out onto the prairie in the neighborhood of Metamora.[6]

The churches thus far described were those of the first generation and were found almost altogether in the timbered sections of the country. In the early fifties the second generation began to emerge from the woods and to realize the values of the vast stretches of fertile prairie land which hitherto they had regarded as mere waste. The building of the Illinois Central Railroad at this time did much to attract people out of the woods onto the prairies. In 1854, the Hopedale Church was organized by the settlers on the Delavan Prairie, with Christian Naffziger as its first bishop.[7]

---

[4] From Smith, "Amish in Illinois," *Mennonite Year Book and Directory,* 1907, page 20; article by Kirchner, *Mennonites of McLean County,* read before the McLean County Historical society in 1910; and William B. Weaver's notes for his history of the "Central Conference of Mennonites."

[5] This has developed into the present Central Conference church at Danvers, Illinois. See Chaps. VIII, IX, and Book IV, Chap. L. Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 231, and Kirchner, *Mennonites of McLean County.*

[6] This by development and relocation has become the Metamora Amish-Mennonite church. See Chap. VIII, and Book II, Chap. XXI.

A little later, perhaps before 1860, a settlement was started on the "Gridley Prairie," now Flanagan.[8] In addition to the above settlements which were made by the immigrants from Europe, a colony of the "Old Order" Amish was established, soon after the Civil War, in Douglas and Moultrie counties, by Pennsylvanians. In 1865 Moses Yoder, Daniel Miller and Daniel Otto from Somerset County visited Illinois for the purpose of finding suitable homes for themselves and friends. They decided upon the fertile lands of Moultrie and Douglas Counties, in the vicinity of the town of Arthur. They moved to the new location the following year and were soon followed by their friends from Somerset County, and others who had gone to Johnson County, Iowa, some time before, and also by a number from Holmes County, Ohio.[9]

Aside from these three Amish congregations established in Illinois during this period (1852-1866) there were five (old) Mennonite churches added to the six of the early period.[10]

---

[7] This has developed into the present large Amish-Mennonite church near Hopedale. See Book II, Chap. XXVI.

[8] This has developed into the present Waldo Amish-Mennonite congregation near Flanagan and in turn was mother to the Defenseless (Egly) and Central Conference (Stuckey) churches in the community.

[9] This has developed into the present large "Old Order" Amish settlement of five congregations in Moultrie, Douglas, and Coles counties, centering around the town of Arthur. See Book V, Chap. LV. Also Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 232 f.

[10] See Chap. IX, "The Mennonites Come to Illinois," First Period 1833-1852.

What proved to be the largest Mennonite settlement in Illinois was started in 1852, when Benjamin Stauffer with his family settled a few miles north of Sterling. Henry Landis, of Mennonite extraction but not then a member of that sect, with his family had arrived a year earlier. John Kreider's family came in 1854 and was soon followed by John Hendricks, Jacob Heckler, Jacob Snavely and others. They organized a congregation soon after and erected a meeting house in 1858.[11]

In 1865, William Gsell from Franklin County, Pennsylvania, settled near Morrison. Others came from Pennsylvania, and several families moved from Sterling, so that this congregation was partially an outgrowth from the Science Ridge congregation.[12]

In the early fifties, perhaps later, a few families from Ohio and Pennsylvania settled in Grundy County. They organized a congregation with John Bachman as preacher and met in a schoolhouse near Gardner. It was here in 1865 that John F. Funk was ordained as English preacher. The church has since become extinct.[13]

In 1858, four families, those of Abe Harshbarger, Samuel Harshbarger, Samuel Graybill, and John Heckelman, came from Virginia to Livingston County, and located on what was then still a raw prairie near the present town of Cullom. These were soon followed by others from Grundy County, Illinois, where the Gardner settlement had been located; and from Woodford County.[14]

---

[11] This has developed into the present Mennonite congregation known as the Science Ridge church near Sterling. See Book II, Chap. XV.

[12] This is the present Mennonite congregation known as the Morrison church. See Book II, Chap. XVI.

[13] This church at Gardner was main line Mennonite but was practically extinct before the Illinois Conference was formed. See Book II, Chap. XVIII. A biography of J. F. Funk will be found in the biographical appendix.

[14] This is the present main line Mennonite congregation known as the Cullom church, See Book II, Chap. XVII. Also Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 286.

In Chicago about 1865 or a little later, Peter Neff and John F. Funk gathered together about a dozen members into a little congregation with monthly services. They built an addition to the Neff residence large enough to hold the meetings. When the building was destroyed by the Chicago fire in 1871, the congregation was scattered and ceased to exist.[15]

The (old) Mennonite congregation near Washington, whose settlement had been begun in 1833, erected its brick meetinghouse in 1856.

The Summerfield General Conference Mennonite congregation whose first settlers had come in 1842, built its brick church-house in 1858.

Conditions in this period had changed very little from those of the preceding period. Making a living was still very difficult. Farming was slightly easier upon the open prairies, but the problem of marketing was just as difficult except where railroads had been built. More frame houses had been built, but the furnishings for the most part were crude or entirely lacking.

The erection of meeting-houses facilitated worship. During this period five church houses were built; namely, 1. Rock Creek or Yoder Church (now Central Conference) in 1853, 2. Partridge or Spring Bay Church (Amish Mennonite) in 1854, 3. Union Church near Washington (Mennonite) in 1856, 4. Summerfield Church (now General Conference) in 1858, and 5. South Danvers Church (Hessian Mennonite) (now Central Conference) in 1863. However there were no religious services other than the Sunday morning preaching in German. The first Sunday school seems to have been started at the Union Mennonite church near Washington, but that was not until 1866. Summerfield claims to have started one in 1865.

---

[15] See Book II, Chap. XVIII.

Some effort was made to give education to the youth. The Ordinance of 1787 had provided that section sixteen of every township was to be used for school purposes. However this land was often sold very cheaply. There being few public schools, the subscription school took its place. Most of the early schools among Mennonites and Amish were for the purpose of teaching German. The boys and girls being needed most of the year on the farm, the school terms were limited to a few months during the winter. There was no interest in higher education as none of the young people took up professional work and it was not deemed necessary for farming.

The pioneer life was not all one of misery, drudgery and handicaps for these settlers found a great deal of enjoyment in such affairs as barn and house raisings. There was a spirit of helpfulness which brought them together in their tasks. They did a great amount of visiting among themselves. The Sundays when there were no services were usually devoted to visits and "big dinners." They were very hospitable and entertained in a very creditable manner. While some immigrants continued to come from Europe, the new prairie Amish settlements were recruited for the most part from the older settlements in the state. The Mennonites came mostly from the East, principally from Pennsylvania.

The Civil War halted the immigration somewhat. The Illinois farmers suffered the same hardships that all farmers suffered during the war. Owing to the war, John F. Funk began his work in Mennonite literature. Funk, who had come to Chicago in 1857, was visited by Rev. Peter Nissley and Bishop John Brenneman of Ohio, in 1863. They discussed the matter of a church paper. Realizing that the Mennonite people should be better informed on the doctrine of non-resistance Funk published a pamphlet, *War and its Evils,* which was surprisingly well received.

Taking courage from this reception, Brenneman wrote one on *Christianity and War*. This also took well. The early issues of the *Herald of Truth*,[16] which Funk started in January, 1864, contained articles on the war question. A number of the Illinois Mennonite young men were drafted. It is not known whether any actually went to camp.[17]

Immediately following the war, more immigrants came into the state. At the same time Illinois settlements furnished emigrants to the states beyond the Mississippi.

With the next period, aggressive Mennonitism begins. The history now becomes too involved to be treated by periods, hence it will be treated according to the various Mennonite groups or conferences which exist at the present time.

Book II will contain the history of the Mennonite and Amish churches now forming the Illinois Mennonite Conference. Book III will treat the Defenseless Mennonite (Egly) Conference. Book IV will take up the Central Conference, while Book V will cover the minor Amish and Mennonite groups.

---

[16] See Book III, Chap. XXIX.

[17] Andrew Bachman, leading bishop of the Partridge Congregation, had to accompany several of his members to Springfield. They were exempted by the Conscription Act of 1863 upon the evidence that they were bona fide members in good standing in a non-resistant religious society. Among this number was John Smith, who was later to become one of the leading Amish-Mennonite bishops of central Illinois. Christian Krehbiel, Summerfield, Illinois, was drafted, September, 1864. He was relieved from this service by hiring a substitute. Others paid sums of three to four hundred dollars.

BOOK II

THE ILLINOIS MENNONITE CONFERENCE

Part I

THE MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS

CHAPTER XI

THE ILLINOIS DISTRICT MENNONITE CONFERENCE[1]

The Illinois congregations were originally an integral part of the Indiana conference. At the annual session of that conference held at the Yellow Creek Church on the second Friday of October, 1871, the western brethren made a request for a separate conference. The request was granted. In accord with that decision the Illinois brethren met in their first conference at the Science Ridge Church near Sterling. The session, conducted in the German language, was held for one day only, May 24, 1872. There were eighteen bishops, ministers, and deacons present. The bishops were: Henry Nice, the chief promoter of the conference, of Morrison; Matthias Eby, of Freeport; and Benjamin Hershey and Daniel Brundage, Missouri. Bishop Brundage preached the conference sermon. Various topics were discussed. Since it was merely a ministerial meeting, only bishops, preachers, and deacons were in attendance. The conference, which met annually, held its meetings in the spring until the union with the Amish-Mennonites, in 1920, when it was changed to the fall.

The following table lists the conference sessions as held from 1872-1919.

---

[1] Much of this information was taken from the secretary's minutes of the Illinois Mennonite Conference reinforced by numerous interviews and files of *Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Herald.*

Location	Moderator	Secretary	Members	Date
Sterling			18	May 24, 1872
Morrison			15	May 23, 1873
Sterling				May 23, 1874
Morrison				May 28, 1875
Sterling				May 26, 1876
Morrison				May 1877
Sterling			14	May 24, 1878
Morrison				May 23, 1879
Freeport				May 1880
Sterling				May 27, 1881
Morrison				May 26, 1882
Freeport				May 25, 1883
Sterling				May 23, 1884
Morrison			9	May 22, 1885
Freeport				May 1886
Sterling				May 27, 1887
Sterling				May 25, 1888
Freeport				May 24, 1889
Cullom				May 30, 1890
Sterling				May 22, 1891
Morrison				May 27, 1892
Washington	Philip Nice	J. S. Coffman		May 26, 1893
Freeport	Philip Nice	J. S. Shoemaker	14	May 25-26, 1894
Cullom	Philip Nice	J. S. Shoemaker	28	May 24, 1895
Sterling	E. M. Hartman Philip Nice*	J. S. Shoemaker J. S. Coffman	14	May 22, 1896
Morrison	E. M. Hartman	J. S. Shoemaker	14	May 28-29, 1897
Washington	J. F. Funk	J. S. Shoemaker D. Kauffman†	37	May 27, 1898
Freeport	John Nice	J. S. Shoemaker	14	May 25, 1899
Cullom	John F. Funk	J. S. Shoemaker D. Kauffman†	17	May 25, 1900
Sterling	John Nice J. M. Kreider*	J. S. Shoemaker L. J. Lehman†	18	June 7, 1901
Morrison	Daniel Kauffman John Nice*	J. S. Shoemaker	14	June 6, 1902
Washington	John Nice David Burkholder*	J. S. Shoemaker Benj. Herner†	19	June 5, 1903
Freeport	John Nice J. S. Shoemaker	G. J. Lapp A. H. Leaman	20	June 3, 1904
Cullom	Daniel Kauffman John Nice	L. J. Lehman G. J. Lapp	22	June 2, 1905
Sterling	John Nice S. G. Lapp	Benj. Herner	18	June 1, 1906
Morrison	J. S. Shoemaker John Nice	Benj. Herner	16	June 7, 1907
Washington	J. S. Shoemaker John Nice	Benj. Herner	20	June 4, 1908
Freeport	John Nice D. F. Driver	Benj. Herner	17	June 4, 1909
Cullom	J. S. Shoemaker D. H. Bender	Benj. Herner	24	May 27, 1910
Sterling	John Nice J. S. Shoemaker	A. L. Buzzard S. Honderich	24	June 2, 1911
Chicago Gospel Mission	John Nice J. S. Hartzler	S. Honderich	25	May 31, 1912
Morrison	J. M. Kreider J. S. Shoemaker	S. Honderich	18	June 6, 1913
Washington	J. S. Shoemaker John Nice	S. Honderich	20	June 5, 1914
Freeport	John Nice J. S. Shoemaker	A. M. Eash††	16	June 4, 1915
Cullom	J. S. Shoemaker John Nice	A. L. Buzzard	12	June 2, 1916
Sterling	J. S. Shoemaker Samuel Gerber	A. L. Buzzard	22	June 1, 1917
Morrison	J. S. Shoemaker J. M. Kreider	A. L. Buzzard	17	May 31, 1918
Washington	J. S. Shoemaker D. G. Lapp	A. L. Buzzard	33	May 29-30, 1919

* Assistant Moderator. † Assistant Secretary. †† Acting Secretary.

As time went on the laymen, taking an active interest, attended the sessions. This greatly increased the attendance. The lay membership present were allowed to vote upon the resolutions, although this was not the usual practice in Mennonite conferences. This privilege was lost when the merger came. The conference conducted very little business besides the election of officers and appointment of committees and board members. The routine of the session was a discussion of problems confronting the different congregations, inspirational sermons, and passing of resolutions. The churches usually adopted them without question. The conference gradually assumed more authority until the congregations accepted the resolutions as rules without even taking a vote. Throughout its entire history the conference has functioned smoothly. There have been no upheavals or splits as in some other conferences. Different churches in their turn entertained the conference in annual session.

The following is a list of bishops who have had oversight of congregations in the state. Where possible the period of service is given. Bishops from other states aided at times. Among these might be mentioned, John M. Brenneman, John Lapp, and J. M. Christophel.

1. Jost Bally, the first to serve in Illinois, ordained bishop in the early forties (?). Died 1878.
2. E. M. Hartman, ordained preacher about 1874, bishop a few years later. Joined the New Amish in 1897.
3. John F. Funk, preacher 1865, bishop 1892, relieved of office a few years later.
4. Isaac Eby.
5. Henry Yother.
6. Henry Nice, preacher 1853, bishop 1868-92.
7. Benjamin Hershey, preacher 1843, bishop 1871, died in Missouri.
8. Mathias Eby, preacher about 1855, later bishop, retired due to old age in 1878, died 1894.

9. John Nice, preacher 1887, bishop 1895 to date.

10. J. S. Shoemaker, preacher 1892, bishop 1902 to date.

The succeeding paragraphs are composed of interesting material gleaned from the conference minutes. The conference of 1873 opposed the holding of offices involving force and serving on juries. The use of a church council was discussed. "In case any question presents itself before the church for decision, then properly a council of the church is taken by the ministers retiring to the council chamber, and each member, separately from the others, goes in and gives his voice for or against the question as he or she may think most proper. The subjects upon which a church counsel may be taken, cannot all be enumerated under any but a very general rule." Every minister was advised to preserve good order during the church service as in many places there seems to have been much commotion, whispering and even laughing. "The attention of the conference was also called to the fact that there are a great many persons, members of the church, who chew tobacco, and who used it even during service—that they sometimes spit on the floor to such an extent that worshipers cannot kneel without kneeling into a pool of tobacco spittle, and that in this way the house of worship is put into a condition that makes it disgusting to those who are accustomed to the habits of purity and cleanliness, and that the minds of the worshippers are often very much drawn away from the thoughts of purity and holiness, with which they at these times should be filled, and that is objectionable to many. It was therefore advised that the ministers should admonish the members of their respective churches to desist from chewing tobacco during services and in every way to try to keep the house of worship in a clean and orderly condition at all times."

The first committee which the conference appointed was one to investigate the difficulties existing in the church in Woodford and Tazewell Counties. In the conference of 1875 the sessions are reported as having been quite lengthy. The brethren were advised not to use lightning rods on their buildings "but trust in God for protection." The session of 1877 advised parents to teach the German language to their children and also prevent "the vain display of personal adornment."

The conference of 1878 relieved Mathias Eby of the office of bishop by his request on account of the infirmities of old age. "It was also considered not advisable that members should exercise the elective franchise, and earnest testimony was given against it; neither should brethren put up lightning rods, nor insure their property; ministers and members should not go to shows and other similar places of amusement and worldly folly. In case that charges of any kind are brought against a member by outside parties, such charges, to receive due attention, shall be substantiated by at least two proper witnesses. This matter was unanimously adopted by the conference."

The 1885 conference declared the use of instrumental music wrong as shown in Eph. 5:15-20. "In reply to a question presented by a member of this conference (session of 1887) an explanation of the 'Mennonite Aid Plan' was given showing that it was altogether consistent with the principles of the Mennonite Church and the spirit of the Gospel. An earnest protest was also made against the taking of likenesses." "In reference to the resolution passed by the Virginia Conference, in regard to the compilation of a new English Hymn Book with music, there was no decided action taken, but no objection was presented; and as a matter of encouragement, it was stated that this was nothing more than what was found in the old German Lancaster collection of hymns now in use already over one hundred years." "It was also stated that the ministers when they meet at the church for service when several are present, should arrange for service if possible before entering the desk, so that the long parleying which sometimes is indulged in before the audience might be avoided. The minister who is to lead the service should also be ready when called on; have his hymns selected and also if possible his text, and take up the service and carry it forward without so much tarrying, which is sometimes very annoying to the congregation, and makes no good impression."

At the conference in 1889 "the question was asked whether we should under any circumstances invite others besides Mennonites into our pulpits. Answer. The matter shall be left to the discretion of each minister. But each minister is advised to be careful in it. If they despise our plain and non-resistant doctrines, as some do, we could not consistently ask them. The conference bears testimony against the perverting influences of the modern system of divorces." "The subject of Prohibition was discussed without arriving at any decision. The question of a General Conference was presented and it was considered as good and profitable for the church." "The church at Cullom, in Livingston County, being in need of a minister, the subject of choosing one was presented and discussed. The question whether a minister could be chosen in any other way than by lot was presented. It was said, that so far as known the lot has always been used and it seemed to have been a good method. The church has been blessed in its use. Many times, however, too much our own ways and thoughts are followed, and the matter is not given fully and entirely into the hands of the Lord, as it should be, and the result is unsatisfactory. The instructions of the Apostle Paul (I Tim. 3) should be well considered and men should be chosen who are apt to teach, and who have the other required qualifications. If, however, the church should be able to unite upon one man having the necessary qualifications no lot would be necessary." "Bishop Frederick Schartner, of Turner County, South Dakota, was present at the Conference, with a view of becoming better acquainted with our church, and if he and his church could agree with us, to unite with the old Mennonite church. The doctrines and rules of the church, and especially the points upon which we might differ, were discussed, and to our mutual joy we found ourselves both in unison. Bro. Schartner returned to his home and consulted with his church, and has returned the answer that his people are satisfied and thus standing in one faith they unite with the Conference of old Mennonites. Brother Aaron Wall, of Minnesota, who was also with us, also fully coincides with the rules and order and doctrines of our church." Wall's congregation, however, later became identified with Isaac Peters' in Nebraska in forming the Conference of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America.[2] No permanent union seems to have developed with the Turner County Church.

At the session in 1892 "each minister and deacon in turn expressed a desire to build on the foundation which is the only true foundation. The brethren and sisters present were asked if they were also minded to build on the foundation Christ Jesus, to which they all testified by rising." This form of testimony was a common practise at all Mennonite Conferences.

The conference in 1893 was very carefully reported by the secretary, John S. Coffman. John Smith, one of the leading bishops of the Amish-Mennonites was one of the speakers. The two bodies were developing mutual interest in each other as shown by his remarks, "It matters not what we are called, Amish or Mennonites or any other name. Let the heart be right so that we may work to the upbuilding of the church in a way that will stand before God." Other Amish-Mennonites were present, several of whom gave testimony. For the first time Sunday Schools were mentioned. The relation of the conference towards them was discussed as follows, "The Conference should have the care of her Sunday Schools, and should make general suggestions in their interest, but it might not be best to make binding legislation, as circumstances are not the same in all places. Where we have organized churches the officers, superintendent, and assistant superintendent, at least, should be chosen by the church. It is best to leave the selection of the teachers to these officers. When members can be had as teachers they could be used, and every teacher should be, if such can possibly be had, an earnest Christian." "As there are expenses connected with the Sunday School, and a record is often necessary, there should be a secretary and treasurer. But it is not the best to take up time in Sunday School in reading reports." Other interesting items were these, "Resolved, that Brother H. L. Shelly be appointed to visit during the coming conference year, all the congregations and scattered members in this conference district, and report at the next conference." "Resolved that no minister from another denomination shall be received into our church as a minister without the consent of the conference of the district in which he is to be received. This conference suggests that in speaking the names of the four evangelists of the New Testament the title 'Saint' be omitted. That is, in speaking of the Gospel of Matthew, to say simply, 'Matthew' and not 'Saint Matthew.' The use of titles is not in accordance with the spirit and simplicity of the Gospel."

---

[2] See Part III, B. 1, Chap. LIX.

The 1894 conference was the first reported as continuing to the second day. It opposed Christian Endeavor societies, "Whereas the object of the Christian Endeavor Society is to unite into one body or organization the young people of all denominations, creeds, and doctrines to labor unitedly for the extension of Christ's kingdom, and whereas many adherents to so called Christian denominations deny the power of the Christian religion by conforming to the world in its vanities, customs, and practices, therefore be it resolved: That to maintain the purity of the church, and to keep the church unspotted from the world and our members in the order of the Word, they shall be restricted from uniting with any such organization. But we would insist upon having Bible Readings and song services conducted in our congregations for the upbuilding of our young people." The mission work was encouraged. "This conference approves of the mission work by our brethren in Chicago, and will stand by them with prayer and offering, providing they teach the Word, and conduct the same according to the Gospel which we believe and practice and resolved that Brother (Emanuel M.) Hartman go to Chicago sometime during the ensuing year and examine into the Mission work, and report the same at our next Annual Conference."

On the then important issue of "pictures" the conference of 1895 resolved, "That our ministering brethren use all possible means through preaching, exhorting, and instruction, to persuade our members with themselves to refrain from having their pictures taken." Concerning the formation of a General Conference it resolved, "That this conference favor the appointment of a committee man to represent this conference district and assist other appointed committee men in making arrangements to organize and hold a general conference, and would hereby appoint Brother E. M. Hartman as such committee man." A resolution heartily sanctioned both home and foreign missions.

Of the matters discussed at the 1896 conference the following will prove of interest, "Outsiders sometimes leave the church and cause disturbance at the time of foot-washing because the communion and the foot-washing service are kept up quite long. In order to prevent this, the services should be made as short as practicable. Plenty of basins and towels should be provided." "An earnest effort should be made to have our own church literature along with the Bible in all the homes of our members. Many of the books and periodicals circulated as Sunday School and general religious literature are filled with novel stories and amusing incidents, that cannot help having a very injurious effect upon the minds of the young people. Children should be taught if possible to love the Bible." Members were appointed to the Evangelizing Board and General Conference committee.

At the 1897 conference J. S. Shoemaker who had been elected annually as secretary during the past four years was reëlected for a five year period. Delegates were appointed to attend the preliminary meeting, in Allen County, Ohio, looking to the formation of a general conference.

The then recently published *Manual of Bible Doctrines* was recommended by the 1898 conference. It opposed a trial ministry in which the one selected is placed on probation before ordination takes place. The conference has continued the custom of ordaining immediately upon selection. The conference deeply regretted the fact that since the last session, Bishop Emanuel M. Hartman who had served the conference faithfully for many years, had suddenly withdrawn to join the New Amish.[3]

A few weeks before communion service was held in the local congregation it was customary for the ministers to retire to the ante-room to which the laity came to express their "peace before God and man and a willingness to commune." The 1900 conference sanctioned "open examination meetings," which merely permitted the elimination of repairing to the ante-room. The conference frowned upon: the patronizing of saloons, having fortunes told, and the delivery of milk to the creamery on the Lord's Day.

---

[3] See Chap. XII, also biography of Emanuel M. Hartman.

In regard to the Home Mission being formed into a congregation the conference of 1903 decided that, "We therefore advise that steps be taken to organize a congregation at the Home Mission, Chicago, and the same be received under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Conference with the understanding that as a Mission the work continues to be under the jurisdiction of the M. E. and B. Board (Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board)." The bishops John Nice and J. S. Shoemaker were appointed as a committee to draw up "Rules and Discipline" for the conference.

The 1904 session declared itself against church members belonging to labor unions "because all that are oathbound are contrary to God's Word, also because unions tend toward rioting, cause divisions and compel submission regardless of conscientious scruples." Members who absented themselves from communion service three times without giving a just cause were not to be recognized as being in full church fellowship. Representatives of various churches obligated themselves to raise the $1,400.00 debt upon the Chicago Mission building.

The conference of 1905 in its relation to the Amish-Mennonites said that it "rejoices to note that there is a growing tendency toward unity (between them) in the Master's service and encourages a stronger bond of Christian fellowship." Upon the question "Is it advisable to introduce praise, prayer, and devotional meetings during the week, for both brethren and sisters, old and young, to engage in," an affirmative answer was given.

Strangely enough, Benjamin Herner, an active layman but unordained even as deacon, was the secretary for the conference of 1906 and was reëlected for a period of five years. The use of unleavened bread and unfermented wine for the communion service was advised.

Appointment of a committee on resolutions was recorded for the first time in the minutes of 1907. The conference body approved of a plan to own and control a publication house. J. S. Shoemaker was appointed to investigate the matter. He was also chosen as a trustee on the Board of Education.

The 1908 conference expressed its attitude on the Local Option Question in these words, "Since the liquor which is contrary to the Word of God, is a destruction to the home, a menace to the nation, therefore we urge our people to suppress it by every possible means where they do not violate the principles of non-resistance."

Upon the matter of members taking part in county eighth grade graduating exercises the 1909 conference disapproved if the exercises were "objectionable and not in harmony with the principles of righteousness." The conference laid plans to raise funds to erect a building for the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission.

The 1910 conference sanctioned properly conducted children's day exercises. The minutes for 1911 for the first time mention a preliminary meeting for the purpose of arranging questions to be discussed before the conference body. The previous rulings against the use of lightning rods were repealed. Upon a suspicion of heresy it passed the following consideration, "Since there is more or less rumor regarding the orthodoxy and church loyalty of some of the students and faculty of Goshen College and since there are provisions for the investigation of these conditions, we recommend and urge that the Faculty Committee and Religious Welfare Committee of both schools make such examination of existing conditions, and recommend to the Mennonite Board of Education such measures which they believe if carried out, would place and keep our church schools in complete harmony with the Mennonite General Conference in faith and practice. These institutions will prove a great blessing in the upbuilding of the church if properly conducted or a great destructive element to the principles of simplicity and unity, if not conducted in accordance with the doctrines of the Church."

"In view of the fact that mission study classes have proved a great benefit in the churches where they have been carried on," the 1912 conference urged "that mission study classes be encouraged." The conference endorsed the plan of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities to open work in South America.

In the 1913 minutes the following appears, "Whereas, we consider the church activities of the Young People's Meetings of such great importance in the development of our talents, be it resolved that we as a Conference appeal to the congregations that they organize, encourage, and support such meetings. Since the Sunday School is one of the avenues of the church for imparting missionary knowledge, be it resolved, that we recommend to each Sunday School that they urge their workers to avail themselves of every opportunity to get acquainted with the field and its needs by visiting mission stations, reading missionary literature, and attending missionary meetings; also to create and foster the missionary spirit in the Sunday School by conducting mission study classes and supplying a missionary library. Since we consider the Sunday School normal work very essential to the progress of the Sunday School work, be it resolved that we ask the Sunday School Executive Committee to consider the holding of such meetings for the state, during the year, and if practicable to arrange for the same."

The 1914 conference accorded the visiting Amish-

Mennonites the privilege of taking part in the discussions and voting upon the same. The bishops and conference secretary were appointed to solicit and arrange such questions and work as should be considered and acted upon by the conference. It accepted "the plenary and verbal inspiration" of the Bible and the fundamental doctrinal statement drawn up by the General Conference. The office of conference treasurer was created.

A meeting of the ministerial body was authorized at the 1915 session. "Since this conference feels the need of devoting more time to Conference work, be it resolved: First, that the ministerial body meet on Tuesday previous to the Sunday School Conference to arrange their work for Conference; second, that they arrange all questions and assign speakers at that time; third, that they make recommendations to the Conference body on all such miscellaneous business as they deem proper." This, however, was rescinded at the session following.

In advising the young brethren affected by the national conscription act the 1917 conference said "That we ask all brethren who are subject to draft, to register as provided for in the Conscription Bill, and proclaimed by the President, and that they simply affirm instead of taking the oath at the time of registering and that they show true appreciation for the degree of immunity we have enjoyed hitherto and for the promise of future exemption and that opposition to war is not founded upon disloyalty to our government but upon the conviction that the Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of Peace." This year for the first time the moderator was elected in advance for the next conference. Members were appointed on the newly formed District Mission Board. In 1918, J. S. Shoemaker was appointed to visit the boys who had been drafted into camp.

The 1919 conference session was the last one before the merger with the Amish-Mennonite conference held at Tremont.[4]

The Sunday School Conference

Since the Sunday School Conference was an integral part of the Church Conference its history is treated along with it. The first Sunday School had been organized in 1866, in the Union Church near Washington but such schools did not come into favor until about 1880. The next move along Sunday School lines was that of the General Sunday School Conferences.[5] After the General Sunday School Conference had held three sessions (1892-94) it had grown to such proportions that it was decided to divide it into district conferences. These general conferences had not been sanctioned by the church conferences. But the Illinois Conference, feeling that it was a good work, made provisions for a district Sunday School Conference at its annual session in 1895. "Whereas the Sunday School work is as it were the nursery of the church and one of the best means of instilling into the minds and hearts of our young people the true doctrine and principles of the Christian religion, therefore be it resolved that this conference sanction and advise the organizing and holding of an annual Mennonite Sunday School Conference for the State of Illinois, and in order to devise the best means and methods to carry on the most effectual Sunday School work, the bishops of this conference district be hereby instructed to appoint a committee of three to act in connection with the said bishops to arrange the program and designate time and place to hold the first said conference."

The first Sunday School Conference was held at Science Ridge, near Sterling, May 20 and 21, 1896. Some of the speakers on the program were: Philip Nice, J. S. Shoemaker, C. Hauter, J. F. Funk, Benjamin Herner, John McCulloh, Melinda Ebersole, W. H. Brubaker, J. S. Coffman, N. E. Byers, Fannie Coffman (Landis), E. M. Hartman, Henry Nice, G. L. Bender, Annie Nice (Rutt), Abram Burkhart, A. B. Kolb, E. J. Berkey, Henry Smith, J. S. Lehman, Emma Lefevre (Byers), D. D. Miller, John Nice, Abraham Ebersole, Phares LeFevre, and Homer Strock. The topics hinged around Sunday School and young people's problems. The conference was really a supplementary part of the church conference as the latter annually appointed the executive committee which controlled the Sunday School Conference. The sessions of both conferences were held at the same time. Before the Amish-Mennonite union the Sunday School session preceded that of the church. Each had its own moderator. The Sunday School Conference had very little business to perform. A few resolutions were passed but the main features were the inspirational talks. The secretary gathered a few statistics from the local Sunday Schools.

---

[4] The merging of the two branches is treated in Chap. XXXV.

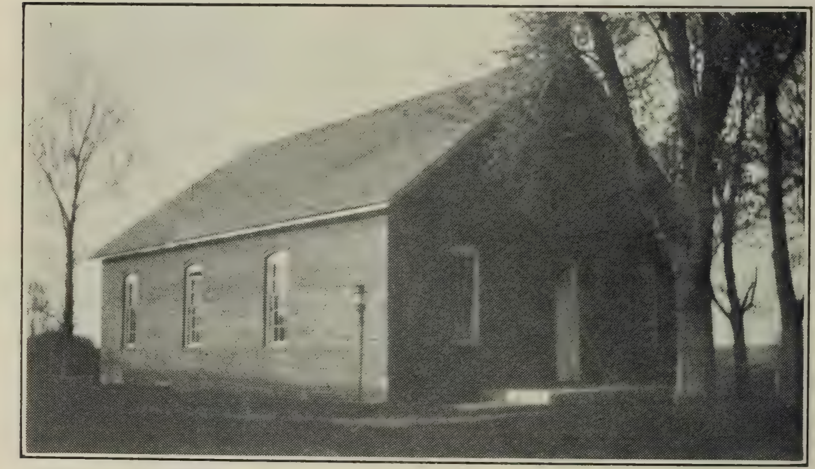
[5] See Chap. XXXI, p. 273.

The following are some of the measures which the church conference passed that had a bearing on the history and conduct of the Sunday School Conference. At the 1910 conference and also at later sessions a Sunday School circulating library had been urged but apparently was never developed. In the same year the office of Field Worker was created. In 1911 the following duties were assigned to that office: "1. To get in touch with the officers of the different schools through correspondence. 2. To visit, as far as possible, all schools upon invitations. 3. To consult with the officers of the Sunday Schools regarding the condition of their respective schools and fields. 4. To encourage them in their strong points and give advice for the strengthening of weak ones. 5. To assist in extending the borders of the Sunday School along the lines of estab-

Union Mennonite Church near Washington

Science Ridge Mennonite Church near Sterling

Mennonite Church near Freeport



Morrison Mennonite Church

Cullom Mennonite Church

Sterling Reformed Mennonite Church

Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago

Twenty-Sixth Street Mission in Chicago, also called Mennonite Gospel Mission lishing mission Sunday Schools and doing personal work in the homes. 6. To encourage the establishing of Teachers' Training and Mission Study Classes whenever advisable. 7. To suggest and encourage the establishment of Sunday School libraries. 8. To supply the schools with the proper blanks for their annual report, collect the same and present at the annual Sunday School conference. 9. And to be ready to counsel with the program committee for the annual Sunday School conference." The office was discontinued in 1917.

Since the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference held some of its conference sessions in far distant places, the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois frequently attended the Mennonite Sunday School Conference. In 1913, with a view to coöperation with the Amish the Mennonite church conference passed this resolution: "Whereas, the Amish-Mennonite Conference has not been officially represented in our Sunday School Executive Committee and Sunday School Conference work in general, be it resolved, that we ask the ministerial meeting for the state of Illinois of said conference to appoint two of the members not otherwise provided for, on the executive committee for the following year. Believing a constitution for our Sunday School Conference to be of help in more fully designating the work of committees and officers, be it resolved, that we appoint two brethren and ask the ministerial meeting of the Amish-Mennonite brethren of this state to also appoint two who with the Sunday School field worker are to constitute a committee to draw up such a constitution as they see best and present the same to the annual Sunday School conferences of the respective churches for adoption." During succeeding years similar attempts were made but the matter lingered until 1918 when definite action was taken. The first joint Sunday School conference was held at Metamora in 1919.

Bible Conferences

Following the General Conference held in 1900 at the Science Ridge Church near Sterling a Bible Conference was conducted. At the church conference of 1902 it was decided that a Bible Conference should be held sometime the coming winter, for such were becoming popular. The church conference appointed a committee to be responsible for the work. Such a committee was appointed annually until 1915. Before this time these conferences had become more or less local affairs and were sometimes referred to as Bible Normals.

The 1911 conference offered some suggestions for improving the Bible Conference work, "By each congregation holding a Bible conference with the home minister or other home talent as assistant to the instructor; by leading the people to interpret the Bible rather than having the instructor giving his own interpretation; by solving problems relative to various departments of church work; let more book study be pursued rather than so many topical subjects; by devoting more time to conference work; and by devoting all the time to conference."

The program generally called for two studies in the morning, two in the afternoon, with one in the evening and an evangelistic sermon following. The subjects for study were outlined on a chart placed before the congregation, well filled with texts, which texts were distributed among persons of the audience for reading at the proper time. The members of the audience read while the instructor attempted to prove his doctrine. The subjects taken up were generally Bible doctrines as well as the doctrines and practices peculiar to the denomination.

While these conferences did a great deal of good in their day they are now a thing of the past. Bible lectures, workers' conferences, and missionary meetings have taken their place, at least in Illinois.

CHAPTER XII

THE AMISH AND THE MENNONITES

The history of the Amish groups which developed in the state of Illinois is quite complicated because so many branches were formed or came into the Illinois area. The congregational outgrowth added to the confusion. The various conferences then became interrelated in coöperative work.

In contrast to this, the story of the Mennonites is far more simple. They began to settle in the state in 1833, only four years later than the Amish. Their settlements usually consisted of only a few families. Over two dozen such settlements were begun but less than a dozen developed into churches. It seems that the settlers merely moved into a new place without any thought as to their future church life. Many members must have been lost from the Mennonite faith in this manner. The following illustrates such a case. In 1867, a half dozen or more families with names of Funk, Driver, Rodgers, Brunk, and Parret from Virginia, located in Henry County, Illinois, near Genesco and Acheson. They came as Mennonites but not having the advantage of permanent organization or ministerial oversight, the colony did not prosper. The heads of families died or located elsewhere.

The various settlements had little to do with each other. This was due not to any enmity separating them, but chiefly to the distance between them. The various Mennonite colonies developed without any bearing upon each other. Europe and the Eastern states were feeders for their increase in membership. But no church grew out of or split away from another congregation. Perhaps the

Mennonite Church near Morrison is an exception to this statement for in a limited way it was an outgrowth from the Sterling Congregation.[1] Then too, occasionally several families would move to some other locality. However during the entire period of Mennonite existence in Illinois there have been no divisions in any congregation or conference, nor has any congregation developed daughter congregations.

Three branches of the main line of Mennonites made their appearance in the state.[2] The largest was the (old) Mennonites which consisted of seven congregations two of which have become extinct. This does not include their missions.

✓ These Mennonites were not disturbed by certain problems that figured quite seriously with the Amish. Although simplicity of dress was insisted upon yet they had no regulation on "hooks and eyes," nor were they agitated upon the matter of "shunning." Both of these issues were the cause of prolonged wrangling and disruptions among the Amish. The Mennonites were not as active as the Amish; their churches did not grow as rapidly and they probably lost more heavily to outside denominations. If the Amish felt the parent body too conservative they usually formed a more liberal branch. In contrast the liberal Mennonites simply sought church shelter elsewhere.

✓ There was practically no fellowship between Amish and Mennonite churches in the early settlement days. They looked upon each other as distinct denominations with the lines sharply drawn. Intermarriage was forbidden. Of course there were numerous exceptions to the foregoing statements. As time went on these Mennonites and a branch of the Amish, namely the Amish-Mennonites, drew much closer together and eventually merged into a single branch.[3]

---

[1] See Chaps. XV, XVI.

[2] The early history of the congregations of the Main Line of Mennonites in Illinois has been treated briefly in Book I, Chaps. IX, X; see on the diagram Nos. 9, 12, 13.

The Reformed Mennonite Church[4] at Sterling was planted there as such from Pennsylvania. It is the only representative of that branch in Illinois.

The congregation at Summerfield was a charter member when the conference of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America[5] was formed. It was the sole member of that branch in Illinois until a General Conference Mission was opened in Chicago in late years.

The Mennonites from Russia[6] form an altogether distinct wing of the church, and never colonized Illinois. In 1907 they planted missionary and publication work in Illinois, in Chicago alone. They have no organic connection with the main line of Mennonites in the state. While there has been some coöperation in missionary and publication work yet the Mennonites from Russia have had relatively small bearing upon the main course of the Illinois Mennonite history. Only two branches[7] are represented in the Chicago work, namely: "The Conference of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America" and the "Krimmer Mennonite Brethren."

The four minor branches of Mennonites in the state of Illinois will be taken up in Book V. The main body of (old) Mennonites will be treated in this division. The plan will be followed of giving the history of each congregation as a unit. This plan will also be followed for Part II which deals with the history of the Amish-Mennonite congregations. General activities such as missions, together with joint activities and the merged conference will be treated in Part III.

---

[3] See Book II, Chap. XX, and Chap. XXXV; note on the diagram the connecting line between Nos. 7 and 9.

[4] See Chap. LVII.

[5] See Chap. LVIII.

[6] See Chap. V and lowest third portion of the diagram, especially Nos. 20 and 22.

[7] See Chap. LIX.

CHAPTER XIII

THE UNION CONGREGATION NEAR WASHINGTON

The Union Church,[1] a congregation of (old) Mennonites, has the credit of being the oldest Mennonite church in the state.[2] In October, 1833, when Peoria was still but four log huts, Benjamin Kendig, his wife and children, the first Mennonite settlers, arrived. They made their trip overland, a distance of eight hundred miles across Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, from Augusta County, Virginia, and settled in Tazewell County on the farm which is now opposite the Union cemetery. This was the same territory in which the Amish had begun to settle a few years before.

Other families moved in from time to time. Peter Hartman from Bavaria, Germany, settled there in 1837. Benjamin Kauffman from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, arrived in 1842. Benjamin Brubaker came from Richland County, Ohio, in 1851. Thus the various eastern states as well as Germany contributed to this first settlement. Other names represented were Althaus, Baer, Bally, and Hirstein.

In the course of time the town of Washington grew up. The Mennonites were engaged in farming, the main crops being corn, wheat, and oats. Some stock was raised and some dairying was carried on. The prairie land was in good condition but the original settlers took to the timberland which they cleared. All of their marketing was done in Peoria. At present most of the farmers have improved implements and are generally prosperous. About the year 1910, the first automobile appeared in the congregation and now every family has a car.

---

[1] Material from answers to questionnaire by A. L. Buzzard, pastor of the church, and interviews and correspondence with Mrs. E. M. Hartman, Mrs. Jacob Kinsinger, Christian Reaser, Christian Engel, Jacob Schiffler, and J. J. Summer. Also, Smith,—*The Mennonites of America,* p. 284 f.

[2] See Chaps. VIII, IX.

The church seems to have been organized in the forties by a man named Brownfield from Virginia. The services were held in the homes and sometimes in the barns before the church building was erected. Joseph Kindig donated a piece of land and the first church, a small brick structure, was erected on his farm a mile northwest of Washington in 1856. About 1886 the Kindig heirs, not being Mennonites, objected to having the church on their land. It was relocated on land donated by Christian Engel about three and one half miles northwest of Washington beside the Union cemetery from which it derives its name. It has been asserted by some that it was hoped that both Amish and Mennonites would become members of the church and in that way form a Union church. Though no union took place there has been close coöperation between this Mennonite congregation and the Amish-Mennonite Church near Metamora.

In 1892 the second church house, a white frame building, was erected. The first ground for the cemetery was donated by one Brownfield and then more was bought and added to it when the first part was taken up with graves. An association with endowment was formed later. Seven trustees who are elected for three years have charge of it. The lots are sold at ten dollars each.

Jost Bally, probably ordained in Illinois, was the first minister and later became the first Mennonite bishop in Illinois. Henry Baer was ordained in the early years but moved to Cullom[3] to become the first minister at that place. A Mr. Hirstein who had been ordained to the ministry joined the New Amish after serving the church for several years. After Hirstein left Jacob Smith was ordained to that office. Albrecht Schiffler, who had come to the community in 1870 from Pennsylvania, was ordained March 3, 1872, by Bishop Henry Nice of Morrison. In the fall of 1878 he with his family moved to Nebraska where he was later ordained to the office of bishop. Emanuel M. Hartman, who had been ordained to the office of bishop by Bishops Henry Nice of Morrison, Illinois, and J. M. Christophel of Indiana, served the local church as minister and bishop of the state being a very active worker until he suddenly withdrew and joined the New Amish in 1897. The church was without a resident minister until J. S. Shoemaker ordained A. L. Buzzard in the Freeport Congregation at the request of the Washington Church and sent him to that place in 1906, where he has since been in charge. Joseph Kindig was the first deacon and served until his death in 1862. John Snyder was ordained as deacon but moved to Cullom soon after. Jacob Kinsinger was ordained to the same office about 1892 and served until he died in 1900, since which date the office has been vacant. Among those that had charge as bishop were: Jost Bally, E. M. Hartman, Henry Nice, John Nice, and J. S. Shoemaker. Since the merging of the Illinois Mennonite Conference and the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois in 1920 the nearby (Amish) Mennonite bishops have had charge.

The church property is controlled by three trustees who serve for life. The first record of appointment was January 14, 1899. The present trustees are Christian Engel, John Weaver, and Henry Hartman.

---

[3] See Chap. XVII.

Funds for the running expenses of the church are obtained by free-will offerings. The minister receives no salary. The church usually responds fairly well to outside calls for help. In the last twenty years they have given almost five thousand dollars. They now follow the budget system of giving, as worked out by the District Mission Board. Monthly offerings are taken.

The order of church service has been practically the same from the beginning. At first the German language was used exclusively but as the children ceased to learn that language there came a demand for the English. It was first started in the Sunday School. For many years the services have been held every two weeks alternating with the Metamora Church.[4]

In the early years of the church, before any evangelistic meetings had been held, the minister would announce that on a certain date members would be received into the church. If there were any applicants they were then instructed in the doctrines of the church and later received into the church by baptism. At present the church aims to hold evangelistic meetings at least once a year. The first series were held about 1889 by J. S. Coffman, Elkhart, Indiana, and Jonathan Kurtz, Ligonier, Indiana. Coffman conducted several series after that. Among the others who conducted services were L. J. Lehman, Cullom; J. E. Hartzler, Goshen, Indiana; A. H. Leaman, Chicago; G. J. Lapp, Roseland, Nebraska; and D. D. Miller, Middlebury, Indiana. An instruction class for converts is held by the minister before receiving them into church. The children are coming into the church younger than they did in the former years. A person is considered a member of the church when he has given evidence of conversion and has promised faithfulness to the church and is baptized with water by pouring. When members wish to withdraw from the church they are given a church letter by the minister with the consent of the congregation. When a member is unfaithful to the church or is guilty of some sin he is visited by the minister and admonished to live better. If he fails to do so he is no longer considered a member of the church. The membership has never been very large, the largest being in 1915 when it was forty-nine. At present there are five members who are fifteen years or younger, seventeen young people, thirteen middle aged, and six old people.

---

[4] See Chap. XXI, The Metamora and Harmony Congregations.

The first Sunday School, also the first Mennonite School in the state, was organized in 1866. It met every time that the church had a meeting. This continued throughout the summer months. Now the meetings are held every other Sunday throughout the year. The Uniform Sunday School lessons from the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, are used. A teacher's training class was organized for a time and completed one course but later was abandoned. The *Beams of Light* is the only paper given out in the school. Most of the families get the *Words of Cheer* and *Youth's Christian Companion* in their homes. The children raise money for mission purposes by using "the quarter fund." Among the brethren who served as superintendents were: John J. Summer, Henry Hartman, Henry R. Schertz, Ed. Schertz, and Walter Yoder.

The Young People's Bible Meetings are held every Sunday evening. A junior department meets in a separate room and has a leader who is appointed by the main body. A program committee of three is appointed every quarter. It arranges programs and appoints the leader and speakers. The meetings are usually well attended and are a means of holding the young people. They also afford an opportunity for them to develop in Christian service.

In March, 1915, a group of sisters met and organized the Union Sewing Circle. Ida Hartman was elected president which position she filled for nearly two years until ill health compelled her to resign. Mrs. J. B. Summer was then president for part of a year until she moved away. Matilda Schertz was then elected. The organization with a membership of sixteen met once a month during an afternoon in the different homes. They sewed for various mission stations and charitable institutions. The secretary usually wrote and found out their needs and the Circle attempted to supply them. Each member was required to pay a fee of twenty-five cents or more, the money being used to purchase materials. At the May, 1918 meeting it was decided to unite with the Metamora sisters and organize a circle, believing more efficient work could be done in this way. A meeting held the following week at the Metamora church resulted in the organization of the Union-Metamora Sewing Circle which has continued to the present time.[5]

Once the church held midweek meetings at which the Sunday School lesson for the next Sabbath was studied but these were not very successful because the attendance was so small.

About the only social meetings that the young people had in the early days were the singing classes. During late years a literary society, which meets every three weeks, has been organized. A program of literary nature is given after which the time is spent in a social way. The church is holding nearly all of her young people.

The singing was in German at first and was all in one part. Later the English language was used. Singings were held in the homes. Some of the teachers for special singing instruction were: Peter R. Schertz, Simon Hartzler, Joseph and Christian Camp, and Walter Yoder. The song books used were *Bible School Hymns, Sacred Songs,*

---

[5] See Chap. XXXIV.

Gospel Hymns, Pathway of Praise, Church and Sunday School Hymnal, and Life Songs. The last two are used at present. It has been about three or four years since special singing, other than congregational singing, has been introduced. This consists of quartets, choruses, and duet numbers. These are used mostly in the Young People's Bible meetings and Sunday School meetings. It has been about twenty years since the first family bought an organ; some have pianos now. No instrument is used in the church, for the Mennonites do not sanction musical instruments in religious services.

At present most of the families take the papers published by the church. The *Herald of Truth* (now the *Gospel Herald*) was taken by the members from the very beginning. There is no regularly appointed solicitor for the church literature. A library in the Sunday School has about fifty books which have been read by most of the young people.

In the earlier years the children did not attend school regularly because the parents were opposed to education. Before 1917 very few attended high school, for attendance was discouraged and the state did not compel it. Since that date most of the young people have finished high school, the first ones graduating in 1921. A few have attended college. The church has been solicited for funds by three church schools, all of whom received some support.

The congregation has had one missionary, Elvina Engel. She first went to the Home Mission in Chicago where she remained for about a year. After her marriage to C. K. Brenneman, they went to the Mission at Nampa, Idaho, where they labored for about two years. After living at Washington, Illinois for about a year they went to Youngstown, Ohio, for about two years. They were located at Canton, Ohio, until 1919 when they both died of the influenza. The Home Mission in Chicago was supported by some of the members from its beginning but the ministers did not favor it at first. Emanuel Hartman at one time was appointed to go to Chicago to investigate the work and was from that time very enthusiastic about it.

Communion services are held in the Spring and Fall. The ordinance of feet-washing is always observed in connection with this service. Council meeting is held two weeks before the communion. At that time an appropriate sermon is preached and the congregation is asked if they have peace with God and man. Preparatory services are held on Saturday previous to the day of communion. Christmas services are held each year at either the Washington or Metamora church.

This congregation was under the Illinois Mennonite Conference from the beginning, having been a charter member. The first conference session held in the local church was in 1893, and four times since, 1898, 1903, 1908, and 1914. The church joins in a Christian Worker's Conference every quarter with three other congregations, Metamora, Harmony, and Roanoke, each church entertaining it once during the year.

Only one member from the congregation was drafted during the war. Though he refused service entirely, he did not receive any serious mistreatment. The church took part in raising money for war-stricken countries but this was always done in connection with the Metamora Congregation so the amount cannot be given.

The local conditions and the community are such that the church will never become very large.

[Since the above was written the Union congregation has been dissolved (1929) and its membership combined with the Metamora church. The pastor, A. L. Buzzard, moved to near Goshen, Indiana.]

CHAPTER XIV

THE FREEPORT CONGREGATION[1]

The first Mennonites to come to Stephenson County, Illinois, were Martin and Samuel Lapp, brothers, formerly from Clarence Center, New York, but directly from Ontario, Canada, in the year 1840. Stephenson County had a population of only 2800 at this time. In 1844, John Brubacher and Godfrey Groff with their families came from Clarence Center, New York, and settled in the community. At the time that these earliest Mennonite settlers established homes in this section of the state there were only about fifty residents in Freeport, the county seat, which at that time lacked railroad facilities. In 1853 Rudolph Brubaker and family, accompanied by Mathias Eby, came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Eby had but recently come from Germany and was still unmarried at that time. In 1856, Christian Snyder and family came from Blair County and Joseph Shellenberger and family and Jeffrey McConnell from Juniata County, Pennsylvania. Benjamin Shoemaker and family came from Miami County, Ohio in 1863. Henry Snavely and family came from Hagerstown, Maryland, in 1864. All these early Mennonite settlers secured homes for themselves about seven miles northeast of Freeport. Other families moved into the community later; among the number were William H. Beidler and Jacob Diller from Pennsylvania.

This section of the country was principally prairie land which simply required breaking of the sod to get it ready for crops. The methods of living were very primitive. The first houses and other buildings were small and inexpensive, just large enough to meet the absolute requirements of the families. The roads were mostly laid out on the section lines. Markets were not very good because of the small population in the cities, the long distances to the general markets, and the lack of railroads or shipping facilities. The cereals raised were oats, barley, wheat, rye, and corn. The machinery used by the early settlers consisted of the cradle, scythe, and hand rake to harvest and gather the crops, and small horse power machines to thresh the grain. Not having any railroad facilities the early settlers frequently hauled their wheat and other farm products by team and wagon to Chicago, 125 miles distant. Regardless of the many disadvantages of that early date the Mennonite settlers in this county prospered and seemed well satisfied with their new environment. The land being fertile and the seasons being favorable to agricultural pursuits, changes in the way of better buildings, better equipment both in the homes and on the farms, and the increase of the population, were very noticeable and gave positive evidence that the early settlers selected for themselves a favorable section of the country in which to establish homes.

---

[1] Information furnished for the most part by interviews and correspondence with Bishop J. S. Shoemaker, Dakota, Illinois, with additional material from J. V. Fortner, deacon, Dakota, Illinois, and Simon E. Graybill, minister, Freeport, Illinois.

Although nothing definite is known, the church must have been organized about 1845, which makes it almost as old as the Washington church. Bishop John Lapp of Clarence Center, New York, visited the community about that time, and probably ordained the first ministers. John Brubacher and Samuel Lapp were made respectively minister and deacon of the newly organized congregation. The membership being small, the church services were held in the homes of one of the brethren every other Sunday for a number of years. Rudolph Brubaker, in erecting a new house in 1855, arranged suitable rooms for holding such services. They were also held alternately in the homes of Samuel Lapp and Mathias Eby for several years.

In 1863 the first church house, a white frame building thirty by forty feet, was erected on the property donated by Samuel Lapp, located seven and one half miles north-east of Freeport. To accommodate the increased congregation it was rebuilt in 1888, with the dimensions enlarged to thirty-six by forty-eight feet. John S. Coffman preached the dedication sermon, basing his message on Haggai 2:9. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former." In 1899 the building was again reconstructed and enlarged to sixty feet in length with a basement under the entire structure. It seats about 200.

This congregation has been called the Freeport Church because of its being in close proximity to the city of Freeport, but in this and the surrounding communities it is spoken of as the Mennonite Church to distinguish it from other churches.

The small settlement of Mennonites at Shannon twelve miles south-west of Freeport about twenty miles from the meeting house is an integral part of the Freeport Congregation. For a number of years, while Christian Snavely, one of the faithful ministers was still living, preaching services were held in their homes in Shannon once every four weeks. Nine members are living in Shannon and vicinity at the present time. They attend the regular church services held near Freeport as frequently as possible.

Sunday School was organized in the Freeport Congregation in 1878 with E. M. Shellenberger as superintendent. The following year J. S. Shoemaker was elected superintendent which position he held until he was ordained to the ministry. The Sunday School was held each alternate Sunday in connection with the regular church services. During the first few years however, after the Sunday School work was organized, the school was closed during the winter months. From the very beginning of the work, though there was some opposition before, both old and young, men, women, young people and children have taken active interest in the work. For the last twenty years the Sunday School and Church services have been held conjointly every Sabbath except when weather conditions were too bad. Since 1892, the following have in turn served as superintendents of the Sunday School: W. H. Brubaker, C. C. Shoemaker, A. L. Buzzard, A. J. Meck, William Pfile, Clarence Meck, and E. B. Shoemaker.

The Sunday School was conducted in the English language with the exception of one class which was German. This was continued for a number of years to accommodate those who preferred to study the lesson in that language. A teacher's meeting was held for several years, usually every Wednesday evening. These were well attended and proved quite helpful in acquiring a more perfect knowledge of the Sunday School lessons. For a while a Bible Study class replaced these teacher's meetings.

At one time a Mission Sunday School was organized and conducted for several years in a school house in a neglected community several miles distant. Attendance and interest in this was good, but the directors in the district were not favorable toward work of that kind, hence they closed the doors of the school and the work was forced to stop.

In 1900 the Sunday School was divided into two departments: an Adult and a Junior or Primary Department, the latter being held in the basement of the church, each having its superintendent and chorister. Both departments are well organized, and supplied with faithful teachers and such literature as is considered necessary to conduct a successful Sunday School. The Sunday School has a small library containing twelve volumes.

For eighteen or more years after the church was organized the services were conducted entirely in the German language. Christian Snyder, who was ordained in 1864, was the first resident minister who preached in the English language. Previous to Snyder's ordination the singing, Scripture reading, prayer, and preaching were in German. At this period a change was made by conducting the services in both the German and English languages. This method was continued for several years until the German was discontinued. The regular Sunday morning services were held each alternate Sunday morning providing weather conditions would permit, until 1905 since when services have been held every Sunday morning.

Early in the eighties meetings were begun and conducted on the Sunday evening when no services were held in the morning. About the year 1890 the Young People's Meeting was added, followed by a short sermon by one of the resident ministers. The Sunday evening preaching service has since been dropped and every Sunday evening is given to what is usually known as the Young People's Meeting, but most of the older people are regular attendants and take an active part in the services.

The congregation is filled with the missionary spirit to the extent that monthly offerings are taken, and have been for a number of years, for mission and charitable work both home and in foreign lands. For the last five years the offerings for the mission and charitable work of the church have averaged $100 per month or $1,200 each year. It is planned to preach a missionary sermon on the first Sunday of each month. J. S. Shoemaker, the resident bishop, has officially been connected with the Mennonite

Board of Missions and Charities since its organization in 1905.

A women's sewing circle was started in February, 1910, at Simon E. Graybills. Mrs. J. V. Fortner was elected president, in which capacity she served faithfully until January, 1925 when her sister Mrs. A. J. Meck was elected to act in that capacity. The Circle meets on the first Thursday of each month to sew and thus provide garments and other material for the benefit of the needy.

The first Bible Conference was held in the congregation in 1902, with the brethren Daniel Kauffman and S. G. Shetler as instructors. The conference was well attended and proved very helpful and inspiring. A year or two later another Bible Normal was held with the brethren L. J. Miller and I. R. Detweiler as instructors. The lessons were likewise very helpful. In later years the method of having Bible study in connection with evangelistic services was adopted. It is the aim of the church to hold such combined services once each year if possible. The first series of evangelistic meetings was conducted by J. S. Coffman.

The church was a charter member of the Illinois Mennonite Conference which was organized and held its first meeting at the Science Ridge Church near Sterling in 1872. The Freeport congregation always took its turn with the Sterling, Morrison, Cullom, and Union congregations in entertaining or caring for the annual church and Sunday School conferences which were held together. The congregation not having a large membership, the conferences have not been held with it since the merging of the Illinois Mennonite Conference and the Amish-Mennonites in Illinois. Before the two Conferences were merged into one, every member in good standing in the Mennonite Church was considered a member of conference, whether a bishop, minister, deacon, or lay member. Since the merger has taken place only the bishops, ministers, and deacons have the privilege to vote in deciding questions brought before the conference.

Those who have been ordained to serve the congregation as leaders and overseers since it was first organized about eighty years ago, were called into service as follows: Samuel Lapp was ordained to the office of deacon when the church was organized and served in that capacity until his death October 24, 1877. David L. Ebersole was ordained to fill the vacancy and served until his death in 1899. Shortly after John V. Fortner was ordained to that office and has since that time officiated in that capacity.

John Brubacher was the first to be ordained to the ministry. Martin Lapp was ordained about the same time. Brubacher died in 1855, and Martin Lapp moved to Missouri early in the sixties. A number of years later he returned and died in 1875. Mathias Eby was ordained to the ministry in 1856, and later to the office of bishop. He was relieved of his ministry and bishop's office in 1879, and died in 1894. The three afore-named ministers used the German language only in their preaching. Christian Snyder was ordained in 1864, and served the congregation until his death in 1872. Christian Snavely, who had come from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and settled near Shannon in 1865, became identified with the congregation and was ordained to the ministry in 1875. He preached mostly in the German language, until he passed away in 1905. Needing a minister to preach in the English language E. M. Shellenberger was ordained in 1879. After serving the congregation for six years he with his family moved to the state of Kansas, but after a number of years returned to the community, lending a helping hand until he died in 1919. In 1886, after Shellenberger had moved to Kansas, J. S. Lehman was ordained to the ministry. After serving the congregation in that capacity for about six years, he with his family moved to Elkhart, Indiana, where he became manager of the Mennonite Publishing Company at that place. J. S. Shoemaker was ordained to the ministry in 1892, and in 1902 to the office of bishop. Much of his thirty-two years in the ministry has been given to evangelistic, Bible Normal, and general church work. Simon E. Graybill, formerly from Juniata County, Pennsylvania, was ordained to the ministry in September, 1903. J. S. Shoemaker and S. E. Graybill are at present in charge of the congregation.

This congregation has never had a board of trustees to control and oversee the church property and other secular affairs. The church property has been deeded to the deacon in charge and his successors. The present deacon has in his custody three deeds to the church property. The first one was conveyed by Samuel and Esther Lapp to Mathias Eby, dated June 19, 1866; the second by Isaac and Elizabeth Lapp to David L. Ebersole, dated September 25, 1879; and the third by Isaac Lapp and wife to John V. Fortner, dated July 15, 1899. The last two tracts were added to make room for the erection of sheds, and the extension of the cemetery. A cemetery association was organized four years ago, after which the tract of land used as the burying ground was deeded to that association. The association is in possession of an endowment fund of two thousand dollars, the interest of which is used for the upkeep of the cemetery. The first to be buried in the cemetery were two children who died just two days apart in the month of September, 1848. The first adult laid to rest therein was Anna, wife of preacher John Brubacher, January 10, 1849. One hundred and fifty or more have been buried in the cemetery adjoining the church.

Since the time of organization the congregation at this place has had a slow but steady growth. The growth has been retarded by the fact that individual members and families have from time to time moved out into other sections of the country. This, while helping to increase the membership in other congregations both in the eastern and western states, depleted the home congregation. The present membership is eighty-seven.

CHAPTER XV

THE SCIENCE RIDGE CONGREGATION[1] NEAR STERLING

Whiteside County, in which two Mennonite settlements were destined to be made, was established in 1836. The first few settlers had come a few years prior. Scarcely any of these were from Pennsylvania. The county was named in honor of General Whiteside who was prominent in the Black Hawk War which had raged throughout this section of Illinois. The county was organized and elected officers in 1839, with a population of 2,500. In 1850, the population had increased to over 5,000 and by 1860, to over 18,000. The soil, principally of a black loam spread over the rolling prairies, was a very great attraction to the immigrants who rapidly entered when there was no longer any fear from Indian attacks.

The "Pennsylvania-Dutch" first came to the county in 1847. Among these early families were several Landises who were members of the Reformed Mennonite branch.[2] Henry S. Landis of (old) Mennonite extraction, who though at first not a member joined before his death, accompanied by his wife and four children, arrived in 1851. They came west by way of the Great Lakes to Chicago which at that time was a small city of less than 30,000. The trip to Dixon was made by stage coach. It took two days to cover the remaining twelve miles to Sterling[3] for there were few roads and travel was extremely difficult. A farm was purchased upon which the family settled in the fall.

---

[1] Material from many interviews, correspondence, and records. Also files of *Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Herald.* John D. Conrad of Sterling, Illinois, compiled some of the information with the assistance of several other members of the local church.

[2] See Book V, Chap. LVII.

The first members of the Mennonite Church to make their appearance in the locality were Benjamin Stauffer and his wife. The train brought the family as far as Chicago where they had to accept the slower means of travel since there were no railroads on which to continue the journey. They arrived at the village in the summer of 1852, and remained in town until their farm, which has since been known as the Stauffer place, was purchased five miles north of Sterling. It was here that the first Mennonite child was born, Emma, the deceased wife of Henry R. Ebersole. During that same year Henry Kauffman and wife Elizabeth arrived. In 1854, John H. Kreider and family settled in the community. About this time John Hendricks and Jacob Heckler came. Jacob Snavely, who had purchased a farm of 300 acres two years before, moved out with his family in April, 1855. The railroad had been built as far as Dixon and from this place the journey was completed by wagon. However the railroad was built to Sterling that same summer. Others continued to follow before 1860, namely: Abraham Detweiler, John Moyer, Abraham Myers, Jacob and Henry Heckler, Leonard Hendricks, Jacob Millhouse, Henry Detweiler, Benjamin Hershey, Benjamin Lapp, and Joseph Allebaugh. Practically all of them came from Lancaster and Bucks County, Pennsylvania, although the Snavelys had come from Lebanon County. In the next decade many new families arrived such as Brenneman, Byers, Alderfer, Zehr, Nice, Martin, Yother, Frey, and Hess.

---

[3] Sterling, which was to become the center of the largest (old) Mennonite settlement in the state, was then but a small village on the north bank of the beautiful Rock River. It was named after Col. Sterling of Pennsylvania.

The largest single addition was in 1865 when a group numbering fifty-five traveling on the same train, mostly from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, came to Sterling. Among this number were the families of Jacob Rutt, Samuel Rutt, John W. Rutt, John Ebersole, Christian R. Ebersole, and Jacob Reitzel.

The first church services were held in Jacob Snavely's corn barn, and were probably conducted by visiting brethren. About two miles north of Sterling, at the beginning of what is known as the Strock road, there was a schoolhouse which had been given the name of Science Ridge because it was a prominent educational center. The name was extended to the community surrounding it. Across the road north from the schoolhouse in the corner of the Landis farm a small burying ground was started, but when the land was more accurately surveyed it was discovered to be upon the land of Jacob Snavely. The community continued to bury its dead at this place. When the Mennonites talked of building a church Jacob Snavely offered to donate land along side of this cemetery for a church house. This graveyard then became the property of the church and was continued for some years as a common burying ground for both the (old) Mennonites and Reformed Mennonites. When the Reformed Mennonites erected their church in Sterling they secured a plot of ground along side which they now use for their cemetery. In recent years the Science Ridge cemetery has been chartered with a fund which provides for its perpetual upkeep.

A meeting house was erected in 1858 upon the land that Jacob Snavely had donated. The members did the work themselves as most of them spent part of their time in the carpenter work. Among those who helped can be recalled Jacob Snavely and his sons, John H. Kreider, Benjamin Stauffer, and Henry Kauffman. The building was a small one without plastering on the inside walls.

The church took its name from its location near the school and in turn was called Science Ridge.

The church met January 16, 1859, and elected Jacob Snavely, Henry Heckler and John Hendricks as the first trustees. It is not certain but probably a minister and a deacon were ordained on this same date. Abraham Detweiler was an early preacher but there being some difficulty he did not preach any length of time, later moving away. Elias Snavely was probably chosen deacon the year that the congregation was organized. Benjamin Hershey, who had been ordained minister in Canada in 1843, moved to Sterling from there in 1860, and became the first to serve the local church for any length of time. He was ordained bishop in 1870.

The church was remodeled and enlarged or perhaps entirely rebuilt in 1871. The following year the first church Conference for Illinois was held in this building. It was remodeled in 1882. In 1910 the building was lengthened and a basement put under it. A furnace and acetylene lighting plant were installed. A large wing was added to the building in 1921. Electric lights replaced the acetylene system.

While new members were moving in all the time there were some who were attracted to states farther west. In the period from 1875-1880, a large group moved to Nebraska. Among this number were the families of John Reisner, Benjamin Ebersole, three Stauffer brothers, John Nunemaker, Solomon Martin, Jacob Ebersole, Eli Ebersole, and Samuel Martin.

The Sunday School started in 1882. The first meetings were held in a school house and independent from the church. Several women, Mrs. Jacob Reitzel, Mrs. Abraham Ebersole, and Mrs. Jacob Ebersole, advocated and urged it. E. M. Shellenberger from Freeport, where a Sunday School had been started a few years before, was invited to come and organize one at Sterling. Since there was so much opposition it had to start outside the church. The school was conducted in the East Science Ridge school house, then newly built, for somewhat over a year. The first superintendent was Philip Nice. Some of the early teachers were: Henry R. Ebersole, Hettie B. Burkhart, Barbara Ebersole, Mattie Reitzel, Lizzie Ebersole, and Sarah Reitzel (Nice). There were four classes all conducted in German or "Pennsylvania-Dutch." At first the sessions were held every Sunday afternoon. When the school was tolerated by the church, it was held in the meeting house following the morning preaching service. This order, still continued, is just the opposite of the usual practice.

The Sunday School first attempted a mission school in the Woodlawn school house led by Michael Ebersole about 1900. At various times since such schools were conducted: at Como in an abandoned church house by John F. Weber, at the Union school house by M. R. Hess and Whitmer Barge, and at Woosung in an abandoned church house by John D. Conrad. These no doubt accomplished a valuable work, but the schools in themselves did not become permanent features of their respective communities.

No doubt from the early years the infant class was taken apart from the rest of the Sunday School. The primary section was separated from the main department in 1911, when John D. Conrad was made superintendent of this department which held its sessions in the basement of the church. About this time a library was established with a few dozen books. In 1923 S. R. Good, superintendent of the division known as the primary, subdivided it into primary and junior departments. Hattie Groff was made the superintendent of the younger or primary division.

The Sunday School through Edward Nunemaker, about 1905, introduced the Quarterly Meeting which is a program discussing Sunday School problems and is held Sunday evenings four times each year. These are still a feature of the work. One of the results of one of these meetings was the organization of the Home Department in 1910, when Hattie Groff became its first superintendent. Mrs. Berger was its first and very appreciative member.

Perhaps the greatest event in the life of the church was the John Coffman Revival Meetings. John S. Coffman held his first services at Sterling in 1889. The tide of the young folks had been turning away from the congregation into other churches, especially the Lutheran. The spiritual and moral life of the community was at a low ebb. Coffman's preaching changed the entire community. In the periods during several years that he held services at Science Ridge the membership was doubled. Since then the church has held revivals at least every other year. Some of the evangelists were George R. Brunk, L. J. Lehman, S. G. Shetler, William B. Weaver, J. E. Hartzler, S. F. Coffman, C. F. Derstine, D. D. Miller, Daniel Lapp, J. S. Shoemaker, and J. W. Hess.

Before the Coffman revivals church services had been held only every two weeks but afterwards the renewed congregation met every Sunday. The Sunday evenings were still unused for regular services. Along in the early nineties the teachers' meetings were held on week-days in private homes to study the Sunday School lessons. These were very popular for a time and also very well attended. They really served a social purpose and were credited with having matrimonial advantages. Amos Ebersole started a Christian Endeavor about this time which furnished the young folks a good place to go on Sunday evening. When the church took up the Sunday evening work the Endeavor, which was not in favor, became a Bible

Reading. Some winters it would die out but ever since the church literature has printed the suggestive programs and topics the Young People's Meetings have continued without any interruption, save when the period was changed into a Bible Study or Mission Study hour. The work has been very successful and much interest has been shown. It is a means of holding the young people and also gives them practice in doing church work. The average attendance is one hundred twenty-five.

The first Sunday School Conference of the Mennonites of Illinois was held in the Science Ridge church house in May, 1896. In 1900 the second General Conference of the Mennonite Church of America was held in the local church. At the same time the first Bible Conference in the state was conducted. A few have been held since then but they have become local in attendance. In that form, sometimes called Bible Normals, they flourished for about twenty years. The present tendency is towards Bible lectures of an expository nature.

The sewing meeting, now spoken of as the Sisters' Sewing Circle was promoted by Mrs. Henry Rutt. The organization service was held November, 1900, at Mrs. John Reisner's. Mrs. Hettie Burkhart was chosen president and Anna Andreas (Mellinger) secretary. The circle met two afternoons each month at first but later adopted an all day once a month session. Originally it met in the various homes of the members. Since the church has been enlarged in its basement capacity it has been found more convenient to hold the sessions there.

In the period 1904-1906, a number of families moved to what proved to be an unfortunate location near Newkirk, Oklahoma. Some of the members with their families were John F. Weber, Abraham Frey, David Ebersole, Daniel Frey, Daniel Ebersole, John Frey, and Frank Kreider. After being there awhile a Sunday School was started. Later a minister from outside was sent in once a month. Finally a church was organized and Daniel Ebersole was ordained deacon and Christian Reiff sent in as minister in 1907. Several years later all had returned to Sterling though not all of them returned to membership at Science Ridge Church.

On the Fourth of July, 1910, a new type of meeting was started to furnish proper observance of the holiday. J. E. Hartzler was called in to give the main speeches which he did to the pleasure of all and to the success of the meeting. The idea was repeated the next two years. Since the near-by churches asked to be taken in, a rotation was formed including Morrison and Freeport. Tiskilwa later sought entrance and was admitted to the round a few years later. Other churches of the state followed the idea so that every Fourth three or four such meetings were held at various points. They have however run their course.

The World War brought quite a serious problem for those who feared being drafted. There were a number of draft age but the only one called to camp was Vernon Steiner, who accepted non-combatant service.

The social life of the young people was not organized at first. Before it was customary to join church before marriage there were no young people in the congregation. After this had changed, the young folks met in an incidental way at the various homes for some pleasure in form of singing and social contacts. Sometimes refreshments were served. The literary society was organized at A. C. Good's home, February, 1917, at which time William Landis was made president and Nora Good, secretary. The society drew up a constitution. It aims to hold a program every three weeks followed by a social hour, after which refreshments are usually served.

In May, 1921, a large wing was built onto the west side of the church to make necessary room for the church conference. The first united Mennonite and Amish-Mennonite Conference was held at Science Ridge in June of the same year. In June, 1922, the third session of the General Young People's Conference, which had been started in France by the Mennonite young men engaged in relief work, was held with the Sterling Congregation. This was a well attended and very inspiring session.

The first to fill the office of deacon was Elias Snavely who had come to Sterling in 1855, from Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, and was chosen at the organization service. He served until his death in 1865. A few months later Jacob Rutt, who had recently arrived from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was ordained as his successor. He served in the office until in old age he retired and later moved to Nebraska where he acted as deacon until his death. Philip Nice succeeded him as deacon, being selected by lot and ordained the day following the Conference session, May 30, 1887. He served until ordained to the ministry in 1891. When Nice became minister, Amos Landis, a native of the community, was ordained deacon by E. M. Hartman the officiating bishop from Washington, Illinois. When Landis moved away in 1894, Abram Burkhart was ordained to that office in February, 1895, and has remained in that capacity since. After seven years' absence Amos Landis returned to Sterling from Union, Oregon, and jointly served with Burkhart for several years until he again moved away, this time to Goshen, Indiana, where he continued the duties of his office. Daniel Ebersole, formerly from Sterling, who had been ordained in the little congregation in Oklahoma, returning to Sterling in 1909, when he was accepted as deacon in the local congregation. He served jointly with Abram Burkhart until his death in 1922. Burkhart was partially relieved of the duties of deacon in 1922 when a religious welfare committee was elected to take care of some of the tasks usually falling to the deacon. In 1923, he was further relieved through the election and ordination of Benjamin Mellinger and S. R. Good as deacons. The office of deacon is held for life.

The ministers were ordained in the following order: Abraham Detweiler acted as an early preacher but did not serve any length of time. Benjamin Hershey, born in Canada, and ordained to the ministry there in 1843, preached at Sterling from 1860 until he removed to Cherry Box, Missouri, in 1871. He had been ordained to the office of bishop at Sterling in September, 1870. Henry Nice, who had been ordained to the ministry and later held temporary membership in an "Oberholtzer" Church (General Conference) in Ohio, removed to Sterling in 1865, where he was accepted as minister. In 1868 he was ordained to the office of bishop and the same year moved to Morrison where he served until his death in 1892. Joseph Allebaugh came to the community as a young man before the church was built. He was probably ordained in the early sixties. His ministry was not considered a success, and he died a member of another church. Abraham D. Ebersole, who had settled in the community a year or so previous, was ordained in 1869, and served until his death in 1889. He was one of those instrumental in securing J. S. Coffman for the remarkable revival services. Benjamin Lapp seems to have been a preacher in the congregation in the early sixties, while Henry Yother, a minister and probably bishop (at least later), moved in for about a year sometime afterwards. John W. Rutt, who came with the group of fifty-five in 1865, was ordained about the same time as Ebersole. Although he was considered a minister and took his place on the platform, yet he never preached. John Reisner, who had left Sterling in 1878, was ordained at Roseland, Nebraska, by

Albrecht Schiffler. He returned to Sterling in 1881, when he became the first English preacher at Science Ridge. In 1889 his health failed forcing him to give up the work. He remained a faithful member until his death. Philip Nice was ordained to the ministry in 1891 and served until retired in 1902. John J. Rutt, a young man born in the community, was selected by lot and ordained June 14, 1897, to serve as Nice's assistant. He retired upon his own initiative during the year of 1899. Christian Good and Samuel Rhodes supplied the pulpit temporarily in the summers of 1903-1905. Samuel Good from Harrisonburg, Virginia, who had come to Sterling in 1899, was ordained in July, 1904; he died in August, 1905. Aaron C. Good, a brother who had come to Sterling in 1902, and had gone to work at the Home Mission, was recalled to Sterling and ordained in February, 1906. He resides on the old Stauffer homestead and still serves as the pastor. At times he holds evangelistic meetings and has been a member of the Mission Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. During the past years of his pastorate the church has increased by one third; the present membership being about two hundred. Amos E. Kreider, a native of Sterling who had been ordained at Topeka, Indiana, resided on a farm near Sterling from June, 1918 to September, 1921 when he returned to Goshen College as a member of the faculty. He assisted Good in the pulpit work while at Sterling. Others from Sterling who have served the church at large are: Melinda Ebersole, at the Home Mission in Chicago for over twenty years; Dr. S. D. Ebersole, first secretary of the Home Mission; N. E. Byers, first president of Goshen College; I. R. Detweiler missionary to India and later president of Goshen College; and Esther Ebersole Lapp (wife of George J. Lapp) who died as a missionary in India.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MORRISON CONGREGATION[1]

William Gsell, having relatives living in the central region of Whiteside County, Illinois who had written favorably of the advantages of the location for farming, came to the state and bought what was then considered an improved farm three miles north of Morrison, October 3, 1864. The first year a large bank barn was erected. John Gsell and wife came out to take care of the stock until William could move his family out in the spring of 1865.

Instead of a disc, it was necessary to use a corn plow to loosen up the ground after which a straight tooth harrow without levers was used to level it off and drag the oats. The roads were fairly good though ungraded. All of them had a strip of grass in the center as every one drove two horses. In a short time grading started and gradually new roads were opened up to the public. Morrison afforded excellent market facilities, being located on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway.

Gsell and his family drove to Sterling in a big wagon to attend services at the Science Ridge Church near Sterling. After a few more families moved in, a meeting for organizing the church was held in the West Clyde School house in 1868. It was promoted by Henry Nice, Benjamin Hershey, and William Gsell with a charter membership of less than a dozen. The church took its name from its location near the town of Morrison and being organized by (old) Mennonites was called "The Morrison Mennonite Church."

---

[1] Information furnished chiefly by Daniel Deter, deacon, assisted by John Nice, bishop, and Henry T. Nice, deacon, all of the Morrison Congregation.

The settlement had been holding meetings up to that time in the Gsell barn every four weeks during the first year 1865, and then in the West Clyde School till the present church house was built in 1872. The present site of the church was chosen by a few members after considerable disputation. Another site in question was about one quarter of a mile east of the present site, a more level piece of ground. But the former was thought to be more centrally located. The land of one and one-half acres was purchased from Joseph Gallentine at a cost of seventy-five dollars, the date of the deed being February 14, 1872. The dedication services were held on New Year's Day, 1873. Henry Nice preached the sermon, assisted by Benjamin Hershey of the Sterling Congregation. The first trustees were Joseph Gsell, Adam Steiner, and Seth Burkholder.

The building is made of red brick, the only Mennonite church house in Illinois of that material, thirty-six feet wide and forty-four feet long, with two doors, one to the south and the other to the east. There are two cloak rooms on the south end, each about ten feet wide. The furniture is of common lumber, having straight square benches and a plain wooden pulpit, painted yellow for a long time, now a dark tan. Formerly kerosene lamps were used with two large hanging lamps in the center and bracket lamps on the four sides. These have been replaced with acetylene gas lights. The seating capacity is about two hundred.

The church has its own burying ground located next to the church house and from the beginning a part of the church property. The trustees of the church have control of the cemetery. Lots for graves are not sold, but are controlled by one of the trustees, who superintends the digging and also cares for the upkeep. The funds are in care of the trustees. The present trustees are William G. Nice, Daniel H. Deter, and Abner A. Nice.

The Sunday School was started when the meetings were held in the West Clyde school about 1870. It was separate from the church until about 1890. The opposition to the Sunday School was very great for some time. Some maintained that if it was allowed they would withdraw from the church. Others would not even allow their children to go; others let their children go, but would not attend themselves. Still others took the children but they stayed outside until the session was over. Thus the Sunday school work was very difficult for the leaders. The promoters were Henry Nice, Sr., Henry Nice, Jr., and Addison Shelly. Bishop Henry Nice was the first superintendent. There were two classes, one in German taught by Bishop Nice, the other in English taught by John Gsell with about thirty pupils in all. The school increased in numbers and opposition died out little by little until the school reached about sixty pupils. After this as people moved away the school diminished until at present there are about forty-five on the roll.

The Sunday evening meetings in the form of Bible study or readings were first held about 1895. In spite of some opposition at first to spending the Sabbath evening in this way they were continued. The meetings usually opened with a period of song service. A leader was chosen who would select certain chapters and topics, and also give topic assignments to various members and children. Later the Young People's Meeting Topics were used as given in the *Christian Monitor*. At present no evening meetings are held because the membership is so small.

The sewing circle was organized about the fall of 1914, with Mrs. John Nice as president, and Mrs. William Nice as secretary-treasurer. The first meetings were held in the afternoon every two weeks at the homes of the members in alphabetical order, and in homes of non-members when invited. Soon it was decided that more and better work could be done by meeting once a month for the full day. The circle attempts to do the work of an organization of this kind and has contributed very liberally to the Chicago Home Mission and the Peoria Mission.

This congregation was one of the charter churches of the Illinois Conference when organized in 1872. Bishop Henry Nice was one of the promoters of the conference. The church conference has been held in the local church on several occasions, the last time being in 1918. Since the Amish-Mennonites have been merged with the conference the ministry are the sole delegates to it.

The church was not called upon to suffer very seriously during the war. The attitude of the community toward the church was one of hatred and malice, although a few were respectful. A number of threats were made but no violence was done. The hostility has died out. Only three, Henry Leidig, Daniel and Ezra Deter, were called to camp. Ezra Deter was in relief work in the Near East.

The ministers' list is composed of the following brethren: Henry Nice, Senior, who had been ordained to the ministry while still in Ohio, and as bishop at Sterling, became the first minister at Morrison when he moved there in 1868. He served as bishop until his death in 1892. John Kornhaus moved from Sterling to Morrison in 1869, where he was ordained in 1871. In 1887, he removed to Kansas and continued to preach in that state. John Nice, the son of the bishop, was ordained to the ministry in May, 1887 by lot, and was made bishop in June, 1895, and still serves in that capacity. John W. McCulloh, formerly from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was chosen by lot and ordained in November, 1893. In

December, 1916 he with his family moved to Cullom to fill the pulpit of that congregation, where he remained until his death in January, 1923. Since 1916 John Nice has served alone at Morrison.

The church at one time enjoyed quite a period of prosperity. But when the people became tired of the hills and no longer considered them essential to farming they moved away and others who passed through journeyed on to states farther west. Others have forsaken the faith of their fathers. The future prospects of the church are a little brighter than they have been for some time past, due to the increase of young people. The church has a membership of twenty-three at the present time.

The deacons who served the congregation were three in number. The first was Leonard Hendricks who was ordained almost as soon as he moved from Sterling, probably in 1869, and quite likely by the resident bishop, Henry Nice. He was removed from office in the eighties. He had also rendered service as church chorister. Daniel H. Deter who had come to the congregation in 1873 from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was ordained deacon by Henry Nice in 1884. In the year 1892, he with his family moved to Iowa where a few families from Morrison had gone before. He returned to Morrison in 1902 and has since conjointly served with Henry Nice, Junior. He has also served as trustee for over sixteen years. Henry Nice, Jr., was ordained to the office of deacon when Deter left for Iowa and served the remainder of his life. Henry Nice also led in singing in his earlier years, and was superintendent and teacher in the Sunday School.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CULLOM CONGREGATION[1]

In 1858 the first Mennonite families began to settle in Livingston County. They came from Woodford County, Illinois, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Canada, in search of good farm lands and a place to make a home. Among the first ones to arrive were the Graybills, Herners, and Shantzes. They were widely scattered over the county. Roads were in a bad condition with market places distant and difficult to reach, as railroads were not built until 1875. They endured many hardships in the way of exposure, hard labor, and poor communication, yet they became prosperous. The people drifted in from here and there, no great numbers coming in at any one time because the settlement had not been planned nor had it been a split from any other church. As the population increased, more of them concentrated at one point which was later named Cullom in honor of Senator Cullom. Among the early settlers active in the church work, were: Baer, Graybill, Harshberger, Heckleman, and Livingston.

The date of organizing a congregation is not known but it must have been about 1860. Meetings were held twice a month in the schoolhouses, the places being rotated so as to accommodate all the members. It seems that there was no definite organization before the church house was erected.

In 1882 Samuel Graybill donated an acre of ground upon which to build a meeting house. The white frame building was erected and dedicated on September 24 of that year. Since it is located in the village of Cullom it is the only one of the Illinois churches not in the open country. In 1914 it was remodeled when a furnace and other modern equipment were added. Its seating capacity is two hundred. The church does not have its own burying ground. A number of the members have been buried in the "Sullivan Center" graveyard north of the village.

---

[1] This chapter is from material collected from interviews with John W. McCulloh and a Cullom group and from answers to questionnaire by Lewis D. Appel assisted by Martha McCulloh, Bertha Reedy, Susie Koerner, Mary Appel, and Olive Hirstein.

The first minister at Cullom was Henry Baer who was ordained at Washington. He died in 1870. Other ministers who served the congregation are: P. Y. Lehman, who moved to Indiana; E. M. Hartman, who was ordained in the local church about 1874 but moved to Washington the next year; Benjamin F. Hamilton; Peter Unzicker, who was ordained in 1882 but did not attempt to preach until several years later and moved away in 1905; John S. Coffman, the evangelist, who supplied there for a while; Peter B. Snyder, who was ordained in the local church about 1892, and moved to Missouri where he died; L. J. Lehman, who was ordained at Cullom about 1894, and after serving as a minister and evangelist for a number of years moved to Indiana in 1908, and allied himself with another group, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ; Alvin Ropp, who was ordained by John Nice in 1905, also moved to Indiana in 1908 and joined the Central Conference Church; and Samuel Honderich who had been ordained elsewhere, came to Cullom in the fall of 1909, and removed to Filer, Idaho, in December, 1913. After his departure the church was without a preacher until J. S. Shoemaker suggested that John W. McCulloh, minister at Morrison, move in to take charge. Feeling that the church there needed assistance, McCulloh accepted the invitation and located in Cullom, December 20, 1916. He was quite progressive and active, insisting that the church should ordain young men to assist in the ministry, and urged the same in his own congregation. His plan was cut short by his sudden death in January, 1923. He had served for many years on the local mission board of the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission of Chicago. For a time Daniel W. Slagel of Flanagan temporarily supplied the pulpit. The church has been a grave problem to the leaders of Illinois. Later S. Jay Hostetler, formerly of near Goshen, Indiana, was given charge and finally ordained. He left for the mission field in India in 1929.

Abram Blosser was the first deacon, shortly after whom came David Lehman and John Snyder. The latter was ordained at Washington, Illinois, and removed to Cullom. He finally located in Texas where he died. Peter Haun served conjointly with Snyder for a while and afterward alone until his death in 1908. At this time Elias Christophel was ordained and served until he removed to Ohio in 1919. Since then the church has had no deacon. Among those that had charge as bishop were Jost Bally, E. M. Hartman, John F. Funk, Henry Nice, perhaps Henry Shaum from Indiana, John Nice, J. S. Shoemaker, and J. A. Heiser.

Since 1915 the church property has been controlled by three trustees who call an annual business meeting, at which one is elected each year, each serving for a term of three years. This body also has charge of the finances. The church never paid the minister a regular salary, but sometimes money was collected among the members and presented to him. In the last twenty years they have given approximately four thousand dollars to outside purposes, $2,800 going to home missions and the rest going to foreign missions and relief.[2]

Revival meetings have been held from time to time.

---

[2] Taken from financial reports which appear in the Gospel Herald each month.

J. S. Coffman was probably responsible for the first and did the most for the Cullom Church in its earliest history, 1882. At one of his series of meetings he had forty converts. It was likely due to him that the church house was erected that year. It is said that it was due to an invitation from the Cullom Church that Coffman first came west. Among the evangelists have been C. B. Brenneman, J. M. R. Weaver, J. S. Shoemaker, A. H. Leaman, A. C. Good, J. W. Hess, D. D. Miller, I. R. Detweiler, N. O. Blosser, and D. A. Yoder. The church plans to have evangelistic meetings but does not succeed in having them every year. Bible lectures have been used and perhaps fill a place of their own in the church program. An instruction class is generally held before baptism to instil the doctrine and principles of the Bible and Church. The converts are perhaps younger than formerly but with the education and instructions in Sunday School they are more aware of their duties and privileges than before. About 1890 the membership was over a hundred but it has now decreased to less than fifty.

The Sunday School was started about 1880 in school houses. It was usually held in connection with the church service except when there was no such service on account of lack of a minister. Noah Graybill was one of the first superintendents.

After the church house was built nearly all classes were in English except one which was in German. The Sunday School has met since 1880, every Sunday between 9:30 and 10:30 A. M. The uniform advanced lesson helps are used but the graded lessons have not been introduced. *Words of Cheer* has been distributed for many years, as well as *Beams of Light, Cards, Youth's Christian Companion,* handed out on Sundays to the scholars. Various charts and song books were used in connection with the work. At one time there were perhaps thirty books purchased for a library but only a few remnants are left. There was a teachers' training class organized about 1910, conducted by Samuel Honderich. The School gives to the general mission fund and to specific places. The money is obtained by regular offerings or by special methods such as distributing quarters to the children for investment. Among the superintendents that have had charge of the Sunday School in the past were: Noah Graybill, P. B. Snyder, Samuel Shearer, Leonard Garber, Elias Christophel, Alvin Ropp, Benjamin Herner, Chester Wenger, Lewis Appel, John Shantz, Henry Baily, John Diebel, Reuben Koerner, Aaron Hirstein, and Henry Koerner.

The Young People's Meetings are held on Sunday evening. They were first started in 1884. At present a committee appoints a leader for three months who makes out a program according to the "Monitor" outline. He then has to procure a new leader for each Sunday. Sometimes a sermon is given in connection with the meeting. The Sunday School and the Young People's Meeting are distinct organizations.

The Cullom Sewing Circle was organized March 27, 1919, through the efforts of Lydia Smith of Flanagan, then secretary of the Illinois branch of Sewing Circles, and Sarah McCulloh of Cullom. Nine sisters met at the church and the following election took place: Sarah McCulloh, president; Martha Hirstein, vice-president; Lena Hirstein and Mary Koerner, material committee; and Susie V. Koerner, secretary-treasurer. Meetings were held the first Wednesday of each month at the homes of the members of the Circle, until January 1st, 1923, when the church building was used. Several hundred garments have been sent to Chicago; Peoria; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Russia. At present there are over a dozen members. The girls also attend during the summer vacation.

The church attempted to hold regular weekly evening meetings. Although there was a good attendance at first it finally declined until all lost interest and the attempt had to be abandoned before one season was over.

The young people had social gatherings at the homes in form of "singings and conversation" and later introduced programs and formed a literary society. The first one was organized about 1914, with Lewis Appel, president; John Shantz, vice-president; and Susie Koerner, secretary-treasurer. The Shantz brothers, Lewis Appel, Edward Drange, and others were its promoters. Programs consisted of debates, speeches, singing, readings, and essays. This work gave the young people training and exercised their talents along various lines. After several years it was discontinued until 1922, when the young people again felt that they needed something to provide social activity and development of literary ability. They reorganized in April, 1923 with Henry Koerner, president; Lewis Appel, vice-president; and Minnie Koerner, secretary-treasurer. It continues to the present time and tends to hold the young people in the church.

The church first became interested in mission work about 1895 when Aaron Loucks gave a talk on missions at a conference held in the local church. S. F. Coffman also brought the matter of the Chicago Mission before the Cullom people. The missionaries that have gone from the local church are Elsie Drange Kaufman and Esther Ebersole Lapp, the latter also being claimed by the Science Ridge Congregation. There is no local church member on any of the mission boards or in any conference office.

Communion is held twice a year in the Spring and Fall. A council meeting always precedes it, being either private or open. Generally a preparatory sermon is preached prior to the communion and feet-washing is always held in connection with it. Harvest Meeting and Children's Day have been observed. Programs have been given on the Fourth of July, Christmas, and Easter.

These are observed by children's programs, and speeches on vital questions of the day.

The church and Sunday School conferences have been held in Cullom several times in the following years, 1890, 1895, 1900, 1910, and 1916. Bible conferences and normals have been held with partial success. The first one was in 1910 under the leadership of D. D. Miller and I. R. Detweiler, the next one in 1913 by Honderich, McCulloh, Orendorf, and Slagel, and another one in 1916 by D. A. Yoder and J. S. Shoemaker.

Many members have gone out and started other churches such as Alpha, Minnesota; Tuleta, Texas; Plainview, Texas; Filer Idaho: Marion, Ohio; and settlements in Missouri, Indiana, and Kansas.

CHAPTER XVIII

EXTINCT CONGREGATIONS

The Gardner Congregation[1]

In the early sixties, perhaps before, a settlement composed of "Pennsylvania-Dutch" from Ohio and Pennsylvania was made in Grundy County, Illinois on the farms near the town of Gardner which at present has a population of less than a thousand, and then had less than two hundred. For a number of years the services were held in a school house. John G. Bachman, then an aged man, was the first minister, ordained in 1863. Since he spoke only the German there was some demand for an English preacher. Bishop John M. Brenneman of Allen County, Ohio, the traveling missionary of the day who visited a great number of scattered churches which had been left to shift for themselves, visited this little church at Gardner, holding preaching and communion services for them. Taking a council of the church two candidates were presented. Since both English and German preaching were in demand, by special consent of the members it was decided to ordain both John F. Funk and Henry Shelly for English and German respectively. They were ordained May 28, 1865. One Sunday each month John F. Funk of Chicago made the trip of sixty miles on a freight train to conduct the English services. Two weeks later the two resident ministers had charge of a German service. There never was a Sunday School or evening meetings as these were as yet opposed in Mennonite districts. The membership of about twenty was composed of the following families: Buchwalter, Showalter, Tinsman, Kulp, Shelly, Whitmore, and Bachman. Some years after the organization of the church they erected about two miles west of Gardner a little white frame meeting house which seated about one hundred and fifty persons. The church, however, was not a growing congregation. In contending with various difficulties that presented themselves the congregation declined.

---

[1] Information furnished by John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana, interviews with the descendants in the community, and files of the *Herald of Truth.*

Samuel Yoder writing in the *Herald of Truth* has the following to report: "On Sunday, December 30, 1884 in the afternoon, the brethren Christian Shantz and John Snyder, with their wives and Brother Haun, accompanied me to Reddick in Kankakee County where Brother Shelly lives. We had rather a wearisome journey, as the road was rather bare in places for good sleighing though we arrived in good time, and had a meeting in the Methodist Church that evening. The next day, Monday the 31st of December, 1884 I went to Gardner. The once thriving church in this vicinity is reduced to only four members, all of whom I visited. They are widow Tinsman, Sister Showalter, Lewis Culp and wife. I attended two meetings in this vicinity at a schoolhouse, and trust that these meetings may be the means of doing some good."

The members, including the minister Shelly, moved to other localities while some joined with other denominations. The last resident members were Lewis Kulp and family. He desired to be where he could enjoy the fellowship and society of a brotherhood so moved with his family to Elkhart, Indiana, where he became very active in church work. Finally, he disposed of the old Gardner Church building to a Norwegian family for a dwelling place and turned the money over to the Indiana-Michigan

Mennonite Conference building fund. Thus the Gardner Congregation ceased to exist.

The Old Chicago Congregation[2]

The *Herald of Truth* was first published in January, 1864 by John F. Funk, a young Mennonite from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who was engaged in the lumber business in Chicago. A number of the German copies were sent to Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Russia. A year or more later a Mennonite brother by the name of Peter Neff from Chicago, formerly from Europe, made a visit to his friends and relatives in Baden, Germany, and there found copies of the paper published in his own city in America not a mile from his own residence. Upon being questioned concerning the paper and its editor he had to admit his ignorance of both.

However, as soon as he returned to Chicago he investigated the matter. Neff and Funk were thus brought into acquaintance. They decided to hold religious services at least once each month for the benefit of the Mennonite people that were hidden among a population of a hundred thousand in this western city. Some time later when Neff was remodeling his residence located a little south and west of the present entrance to Lincoln Park, he arranged for an addition large enough to hold services. The extra cost of eight hundred dollars was shared equally between the two promoters, Neff and Funk.

This was the first Mennonite Church in Chicago. It was not the work of a missionary society because no organization of that kind existed in the entire church at that time. John F. Funk who had been ordained at Gardner in May, 1865 did the preaching until his editorial and publication duties became so heavy as to preclude him from giving attention to the little congregation of about twenty members. Funk moved to Elkhart, Indiana in 1867. When the Great Fire swept Chicago, October 8, 1871, consuming four miles of wooden buildings and destroying property at the rate of $110,000 per minute, the store and buildings of Brother Neff were burnt. It being necessary for Neff to direct his attention to other work, the church rooms were not replaced and the little band was scattered.

---

[2] Information from correspondence and interviews with John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana.

Part II

THE AMISH-MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS

CHAPTER XIX

THE AMISH GENERAL CONFERENCE

In order to understand what brought the Amish General Conference into being a bird's-eye view of the Amish throughout the United States will be given.

During the period from 1862 to 1878 annual conferences attended by most of the Amish bishops, ministers, and deacons in the United States and Canada were held by the Amish Church.

In doctrine there was not much difference between the Amish and the Mennonites. Both adopted the Dort Confession of Faith of 1632 as the best expression of their faith. The Amish, however, insisted on a more rigid application of the ban and the practice of "shunning." They held no conference and each community was independent of every other in its church government. Like the Mennonites they had developed a strong denominational spirit. They always settled in small colonies and thus came very little into contact with outsiders.

They were in many respects even more conservative than the Mennonites and slow to adopt new customs, whether in their daily living or in religious worship. In Europe they had had no meeting houses. Religious services were always held in private houses. When they came to America, at first necessity and finally custom fixed the same practice here. Meeting houses before 1850 were everywhere looked upon as worldly and few were erected. Since the members of the congregation often were scattered over a considerable territory and some had as much as fifteen miles to go to the place of meeting, the members with whom the congregation met served dinner to all those present. Services were generally long, lasting until late in the afternoon, and were conducted in the German language, or in the East in the "Pennsylvania-Dutch." Preachers usually were plentiful. The Partridge Congregation in Illinois at one time was blessed with thirteen, four of whom were bishops. Usually three or four took part in the service. Preachers and other church officials were chosen by lot and were of three classes, "Völlige Diener" or bishops, "Diener zum Buch" or preachers, and "Armendiener" or deacons. The old hymn book, the *Ausbund,* popularly known as "Das dicke Liederbuch" (the thick songbook), was still used exclusively in religious worship. In their singing all sang the melody "einstimmig," as it was called. To sing the four parts seemed worldly and hence was not permitted. The use of notes with the hymns was a rather modern innovation and so made no headway against the older custom.

The conservatism of the Amish manifested itself especially in their personal appearance and manner of dress. No jewelry was allowed. Pride is apt to show itself most conspicuously in bodily adornment, and hence in order to be "unworldly" which frequently meant to be unlike other people, they were slow to adopt any changes and frequently went to extreme lengths in customs. Clothes were home made, of prescribed material and cut. The men wore no suspenders, for these were considered useless and worldly innovations long after they had come into common use among their fellow men. The most conspicuous deviation from the usual customs of dress was the use of hooks and eyes instead of buttons on their coats and vests. This was also a relic from an earlier day when buttons were unknown. But at the time of the Amish schism in 1693 both parties wore hooks and eyes. It was not a point of difference originally; Mennonites merely abandoned the custom sooner than did the Amish. Every young man also was required as soon as he was able to grow a beard, but was not permitted to wear a mustache. The hair was worn long and was cut according to a prescribed rule. The women, likewise, were extremely plain in their clothes. Their dress was of a single color, usually black or a dark shade, made with a cape over the shoulders and always accompanied with an apron. On their heads they wore the old fashioned, long, "slat" bonnet. During meeting or prayer and often continuously they wore black or white caps as a devotional covering. It was the custom for the preacher to carry the marriage proposal from the young man to the young woman without these having had any previous courtship.

In their homes and in their everyday life the Amish were equally plain and simple. Pictures, curtains, carpets, and everything that did not serve some immediate useful purpose was discarded as an evidence of pride. In the early half of the nineteenth century modern top-buggies and in some cases wind mills and other modern improvements and conveniences were often rejected as too worldly.

The Amish, like the Mennonites, were opposed to higher education, but were in sympathy with such elementary training as would enable their children to read and write.

In spite of these peculiarities, however, the Amish possessed the sounder and homelier virtues to a high degree, and always won the respect and regard of those among whom they lived. In making purchases or borrowing money they were not required to give a note as their word was considered sufficient. They took no oaths but affirmed when necessary. No bad language or swearing was permitted. Difficulties were settled out of court but never by personal encounter. They were hardworking, industrious, frugal, honest, and usually prosperous, owning the finest farms and best houses in their communities, although these were unadorned. Above all, they were devoutly religious. Wherever a colony was located there a church was soon organized.

Up to the year 1850, the Amish of America were one body and differed little in their social customs and religious faith and practices. But by that time, owing to the new element from Europe, the lack of conferences and disintegrating influences due to the practice of settling in small colonies in various parts of the country, slight differences both in opinions and customs began to creep into the church.

The first question to arouse a general discussion was that of baptism. About 1850, Solomon Beiler, a bishop in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, declared that baptism ought to be administered in a running stream, and not within a house, as had been the practice up to that time. The question was taken up by others in the Kishocoquillas Valley, and created considerable discussion. Beiler's chief opponent was Abraham Pitsche, another bishop in the valley. Under the leadership of these two men the discussion was kept up for the next ten years. The dispute was never compromised and resulted in a division of the Mifflin County Church. The followers of Pitsche are now called the "Pitsche" Church.

In the meantime the question was taken up in other localities. In 1850 Jacob Yoder, a minister in Wayne County, Ohio, declared in favor of Beiler's views. He succeeded in getting a small following in his own county, but was strongly opposed by the Holmes County churches which were still very conservative. Differences of opinion on other questions arose between these two communities. In 1860 one of the Holmes County adherents, in speaking of the Wayne County group says in "Pennsylvania Dutch," roughly translated as follows:

"They do not consider the Abrath, that is the custom of the minister's withdrawing to the little side room before services, as necessary. Sometimes the Abrath is held with open doors in the presence of outsiders. The *Ausbund,* 'the old thick song book,' has been discarded and a new book of melodies introduced. They no longer use the prayer book. The Ban and Shunning are seldom practised. Pride, luxury, and worldliness prevail. They say that external things do not count as long as the heart is right. Their houses are adorned lavishly. All this and other things have sprung up through the influence of J. Yoder and his followers."

It was for the purpose of harmonizing these and other differences which had arisen among the various churches of the country that a series of annual general conferences were inaugurated which were known as "Diener Versammlungen," (ministers' meetings). The first of these was held June 10-12, 1862 in Wayne County. As there was no other building available to accommodate the crowd the meeting was held in Jonathan Schrock's barn near Smithville, Ohio. At this session there were present seventy-two members from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. Jonathan Yoder of the Rock Creek congregation, Illinois, was chosen as the moderator of this first Amish Conference. The question of baptism which had been the source of discussion for ten years, was considered. Various opinions were expressed without coming to any definite agreement. The churches differed on other matters as well. Levi Miller of Holmes County, representing the conservative element, said that other subjects need consideration, such as lightning rods, photographs, lotteries, large meeting houses, and insurance.

That there was considerable dissension throughout the church at this time is shown by the fact that the conference appointed special committees to investigate the troubles existing between the congregations of Elkhart and Lagrange Counties, Indiana; Holmes and Wayne Counties, Ohio, and Champaign and Logan Counties, Ohio. Complaint was also made that the congregation in Butler County, Ohio permitted the use of musical instruments. The subject of "kleider-pracht" (fancy clothes) likewise received some attention.

After a two days' discussion of these various subjects, evidently without coming to any definite conclusion on any of them, the conference adjourned to meet again the following year in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania.

These meetings were held annually for 17 years in various states. In 1866 the conference was held at the home of John Strubhar near Danvers, Illinois. It is interesting to note that the following ministers of Illinois were present: from McLean County, Joseph Stuckey, Christian Gingrich, Michael Miller, Johannes Stehli, Kilean Kennel, Christ Nafziger, John Strubhar, Andreas Augstein, and Christian Rupp; from Livingston County, John P. Schmidt, Jacob Wagler, Valentine Neuhauser, John Albrecht, and Christ Schlegel; from Tazewell County, Joseph Burkey, Jacob Hostettler, Andreas Rupp, Jacob Unsicker, Peter Rupp, Andreas Burkey, Joseph Burkey, Joseph Hostettler, Christ Nafziger, Noah Augspurger, Daniel Brenneman, Peter Guth, Nicholas Roth, Peter Roth, Christ Gerber, Christ Schertz, Michael Moseman, Daniel Roth, and Johann Nafziger; from Woodford County, Jacob Zehr, Christ Risser, Jonathan Yoder, Michael König, Jacob Miller, Michael Kinsinger, Joseph Bachman, Jacob Nafziger, Christ Schertz, and Joseph Betzley; and from Bureau County, Joseph Albrecht and Andreas Zimmerman.[1] Michael Moseman and Nicholas Ropp of Wesley City congregation are in this list as this is just before they joined the Egly faction. The conference in Illinois was held a second time near Flanagan, Livingston County, in 1871.

The following notice appeared in the *Herald of Truth* for May, 1871: "We hereby inform all those who desire to attend the Amish Mennonite Conference, which is to meet on Whit Sunday, May the 28th, in Livingston County, Illinois that all those coming from the east will please stop at Chenoa, while those coming from the west stop at Gridley. We also desire to extend a cordial invitation to all the beloved brethren, both East and West to visit us at that time and attend the Conference and help to labor for the edification and upbuilding of the church, a closer union among us all, and that many cold and weary hearts may be warmed and encouraged. But if a single soul could be saved hereby, there would be more gained than all the world besides. Beloved brethren and sisters, let us all seek to do good and not grow weary, and we shall reap without ceasing. Let us all seek to do our utmost to promote that peace which is from above for we may here already possess a foretaste of the heavenly peace within our souls, but how much more will our hearts rejoice when we shall see Him as He is. And if we possess peace among ourselves, we have the promise of being called the children of God, and if we are merciful to our fellows, we shall also obtain the mercy of God; but if we are unmerciful, we must also expect a God of justice to deal with us; for mercy rejoiceth against judgment."[2]

---

[1] This list is from Smith, *Mennonites of America*, p. 504 f.

[2] From the announcement of the Amish Conference by J. P. Schmitt in *Herald of Truth,* Vol. VIII, No. 5, p. 73.

Questions relating to the general policy of the church were discussed at these meetings. Generally discussions were plentiful, but definite decisions few. The decisions of the meetings were counted as merely advisory and not as binding regulations. One of the sessions held during the war decreed that no member could serve as a teamster in the army, neither could any one who had been in the war and had been disabled before he had been a member lay claim to any pension that might be due him. In 1868 it was decided that since the Amish were a non-resistant people, they could not deliver up a thief to the civil authorities for punishment. During several of the following years the trouble with Joseph Stuckey claimed some attention from the conference, but the later sessions with a few exceptions are not of great interest. Among the leading spirits of these conferences were J. K. Yoder of Wayne County, Ohio, Jonathan Yoder and Joseph Stuckey of Illinois, John P. King of Logan County, Ohio, and Shem Zook, a layman from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania who frequently acted as secretary of the conference. Although these meetings may have been productive of some good, yet they failed to bring about the object for which they were first called—harmony among the various factions. The last session was held June 9-12, 1878 near Eureka, Illinois. The sessions were discontinued because of lack of interest on the part of the ministry, failure of the conferences to bring about harmony, and to a slight degree petty jealousies among some of the leaders. Some years later the General Amish conference was replaced by the three district conferences—Eastern, Indiana-Michigan, and Western. The Amish forming these district conferences became known as Amish-Mennonites. They maintained a slightly more conservative course than the Amish that followed Joseph Stuckey.

CHAPTER XX

THE WESTERN DISTRICT AMISH-MENNONITE CONFERENCE[1]

In taking up the Amish-Mennonites it is necessary to return again to the original Bloomington-Peoria settlement of Amish in Central Illinois. There were nine original congregations as follows:[2] Partridge (1833), Dillon Creek (1837), Wesley City (1837), Delavan Prairie (1854), Mackinaw (1835), Rock Creek (1851), Hessians south of Danvers (1859), Gridley Prairie (1860), and Putnam County (1835). The foregoing historical treatise has disposed of these congregations as follows: Though the New Amish took away a few members from Partridge, Dillon Creek, and a few other congregations, yet these congregations continued as before functioning as Amish churches. When the Egly or Defenseless Conference movement entered Illinois it took the entire Wesley City congregation bodily from which the Groveland Defenseless Church developed. Besides it deflected a section of the Gridley Prairie congregation which developed into the Salem Church near Gridley. However the majority remained in the original congregation which continued as an Amish church. All nine churches had considered themselves as members of the General Amish Conference (Die Diener Versammlungen).[3] When the misunderstanding arose between this conference and Joseph Stuckey, the

---

[1] Material chiefly from both English and German printed reports of Western District Amish-Mennonite Conferences 1890-1920.

[2] See Book I, Chaps. VIII, p. 91 ff; X, p. 120 ff; the diagram and the maps.

[3] The General Amish Conferences are treated more fully in Chap. XIX.

North Danvers Church, the successor to the Rock Creek (Yoder) Church, was diverted from the main Amish current. The Hessian South Danvers Church being of a liberal character had taken its own course. These two congregations with their outgrowth and reënforcement from other Amish congregations developed into the Central Conference of Mennonites.

Of the original nine congregations, at the close of the General Amish Conferences in 1878, (others had been established in the meantime), there were six who were still to be classified as Amish. However these congregations, who formed the balance of the Bloomington-Peoria Amish settlement after the New Amish, the Defenseless Mennonites, and the Central Conference of Mennonites had taken their portions, had not remained strictly Amish. They had begun to discard "Old Order" customs and practices though they could by no means be called liberal. Since they began to resemble the Mennonites the name Amish-Mennonites was eventually applied to them.[4] These Amish Mennonite churches had favored the General Amish conferences. When these were discontinued they still retained a desire for some form of conference. A conference was called in Illinois about 1882 to consider the attitude the Amish-Mennonites should assume towards Joseph Stuckey but no definite action was taken. The question eventually solved itself, as Joseph Stuckey never identified himself with any conference, and continued in his work of building up his own churches.

A conference was called in 1883 to meet in the Cass County, Missouri, Sycamore Church, which was having trouble concerning the wearing of hooks and eyes instead of buttons. It seems strange that a question like this should be made a subject for so much discussion. However, it was great enough in those days to disturb the peace of many congregations, even causing division in places, and is still a disturbing factor among the more conservative Amish.

---

[4] See Book I, Chap. III.

Since all Amish are Mennonites the full name would be Amish Mennonites. However the hyphenated form refers only to this particular branch.

The year following (1884) another conference was called to meet in Henry County, Iowa, at which time it was agreed to hold conferences annually from then on. The question of permitting brethren to wear buttons was again discussed. While the position of the church was not clearly defined, it was understood that wherever the wearing of buttons could be tolerated without raising a disturbance, it should no longer be made a test of church fellowship. This was the beginning of the solution of a most vexing question. It had the double effect of restoring peace to many congregations and of drawing the line of distinction more sharply between them and the more conservative and "Old Order" branches.

The question of shunning expelled members also received its full share of attention. After much discussion, it was finally agreed that the question be left open to the individual conscience of each member to assume such an attitude toward expelled members as he felt the scriptures required him to take. Thus fell the last barrier which separated the Mennonites and Amish-Mennonites in doctrine. Yet they still retained separate organizations until 1920.[5]

The first sessions of conference were marked for their extreme caution. On account of differences of opinion on vital questions, general regulations were not undertaken. They came together, not to give voice or direction to church doctrine and work, but, as brethren endeavoring to promote a spirit of unity and good will, and seeking common ground upon which to unite.[6] These ministers' meetings continued to be held annually until 1890 when the Amish-Mennonite congregations of Illinois and those farther West organized more definitely into the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference.

---

[5] This date refers only to the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference; The Indiana-Michigan Amish-Mennonite Conference, formed in 1888, had been dissolved a few years before and the Eastern District Amish-Mennonite Conference, formed in 1904, was not merged until 1928. They were treated in Book I, Chap. III.

The Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference held its meetings annually as follows:

Location	Moderators	Secretaries	Members	Dates
Sycamore Grove, Cass Co., Mo.	Joseph Schlegel	Joseph Byler	9	May 29-31, 1890
Fairview, Seward Co., Neb.	J. K. Yoder D. J. Johns	John Smith J. F. Funk	18	May 28-31, 1891
Roanoke, Woodford Co., Ill.	Joseph Schlegel D. C. Yoder	Joseph Rediger D. J. Johns	28	June 9, 1892
Sugar Creek, Henry Co., Ia.	J. Schmucker Joseph Schlegel	John Smith J. P. Smith	16	Sept. 22-23, 1893
Hopedale, Tazewell Co., Ill.	Joseph Schlegel D. J. Johns	Daniel Graber John Smith	35	Sept. 14-15, 1894
Sycamore Grove, Cass Co., Mo.	J. P. Schmucker Joseph Schlegel	John Smith H. Rychner	24	Sept. 5- 7, 1895
Willow Springs, Tiskilwa, Ill.	Joseph Schlegel M. A. Mast	J. Kurtz Daniel Graber	30	Sept. 17-18, 1896
Fairview, Milford, Nebr.	S. Gerig E. A. Hartman	L. J. Miller Daniel Graber	29	Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1897
Sugar Creek, Henry Co., Ia.	J. Schlegel D. J. Johns	J. Smith C. Z. Yoder	33	Sept. 29-30, 1898
Pleasant Grove, Tremont, Ill.	Joseph Schlegel J. P. Smucker	Daniel Kauffman Daniel Graber	41	Sept. 14-15, 1899
Sycamore Grove, Cass Co., Mo.	S. Gerig D. J. Johns	John Smith C. R. Gerig	29	Oct. 4- 5, 1900
Waldo, Gridley, Ill.	Joseph Schlegel D. J. Johns	Peter Garber Daniel Graber	37	Sept. 26-27, 1901
Pleasant View, Milford, Nebr.	S. Gerig John Smith	Samuel Gerber Daniel Graber	33	Oct. 10-11, 1902
Sugar Creek, Wayland, Ia.	John Smith Benjamin Gerig	C. Z. Yoder Samuel Gerber	40	Sept. 29-30, 1903
Hopedale, Illinois	Joseph Schlegel S. Gerig	Samuel Gerber Daniel Graber	38	Sept. 21-22, 1904
Sycamore Grove, Cass Co., Mo.	John Smith S. Gerig	Samuel Gerber Daniel Graber	22	Oct. 11-12, 1905
Roanoke, Illinois	S. Gerig D. D. Miller	D. J. Johns Daniel Graber	40	Sept. 26-27, 1906

---

[6] Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History,* p. 307 f.

East Union, Kalona, Ia.	A. A. Schrock L. J. Miller	J. S. Hartzler E. L. Frey	27	Sept. 19-20, 1907
East Fairview Milford, Nebr.	S. Gerig A. A. Schrock	Samuel Gerber Daniel Graber	41	Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1908
East Bend, Fisher, Ill.	S. Gerig J. C. Birky	S. Gingerich C. A. Hartzler	32	Sept. 22-23, 1909
Crystal, Kansas	A. A. Schrock L. J. Miller	E. L. Frey Daniel Graber	32	Sept. 15-16, 1910
Willow Springs, Tiskilwa, Ill.	J. C. Birky Samuel Gerber	Fred Gingerich C. A. Hartzler	29	Sept. 6- 7, 1911
Sugar Creek, Wayland, Ia.	A. A. Schrock Samuel Gerber	Fred Gingerich C. A. Hartzler	45	Sept. 25-26, 1912
Sycamore Grove, Cass Co., Mo.	Samuel Gerber A. A. Schrock	Abner G. Yoder C. A. Hartzler	34	Oct. 7-10, 1913
Waldo A. M. Ch. Flanagan, Ill.	Samuel Gerber A. A. Schrock	Simon Gingerich C. A. Hartzler	49	Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1914
W. Union Ch. Wellman, Ia.	Samuel Gerber Samuel C. Yoder	Simon Gingerich C. A. Hartzler	46	Sept. 22-23, 1915
Milford, Nebraska	Samuel Gerber S. C. Yoder	C. A. Hartzler Simon Gingerich	45	Oct. 4- 5, 1916
Manson, Iowa	Samuel Gerber S. C. Yoder	C. A. Hartzler		Sept. 27, 1917
Roanoke, Illinois	Samuel Gerber S. C. Yoder	C. A. Hartzler	42	Sept. 18-19, 1918
Garden City, Missouri	Samuel Gerber S. C. Yoder	C. A. Hartzler	62	Oct. 15-16, 1919
Pleasant Grove, Tremont, Ill.	S. C. Yoder Samuel Gerber	C. A. Hartzler	64	Sept. 9-10, 1920

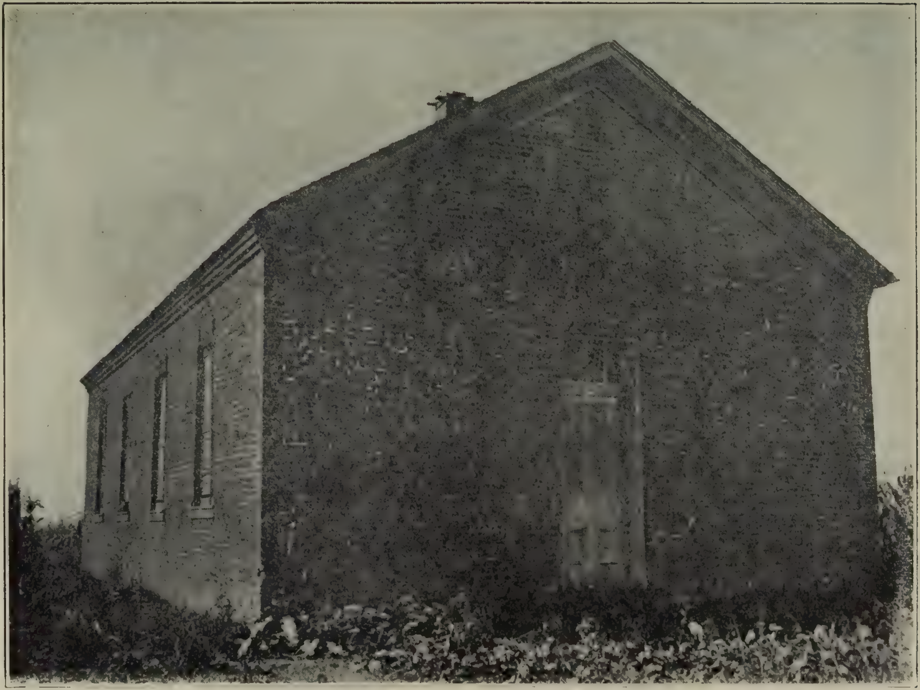
The churches composing the conference were scattered through the states of Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, and Illinois. The following were the congregations in the state of Illinois: Metamora, which was the successor to the Partridge Creek congregation; Pleasant Grove near Tremont, which was the Dillon Creek congregation; Roanoke and Goodfield, the two congregations which grew from the original Mackinaw meeting; Hopedale which was the Delavan Prairie congregation; Waldo near Flanagan which was the Gridley Prairie church; Willow Springs near Tiskilwa, which had been formed by the original settlement in Putnam county moving across into Bureau county; and East Bend congregation near Fisher which had been established later. There were also small congregations at Shelbyville and Arthur but they are no longer in existence. The small congregation at Ohio Station may be considered as part of the Tiskilwa congregation.

The succeeding paragraphs are composed of interesting material gleaned from the Conference minutes. At the 1890 session "The question of church rules" was considered of secondary importance and therefore was not entered for discussion. This is radically different from the attitude in the last session in 1920 when a detailed set of regulations was passed. This demonstrates the growth of conference authority. The first conference condemned farmers' organizations, parties for the young people, and government war pensions. The use of English in the pulpit was advised where it was best understood. However the conference specifically stated that these rules were not binding.

At the 1891 session church members were forbidden the privilege of holding any "worldly office" except school director, road master, and postmaster. Attendance at fairs was not permitted. The conference accepted the invitation of the Mennonites to work in unison with them through the Evangelizing Committee which was then in existence. Members from the Mennonite congregations were to be accepted into church fellowship if they presented a letter from their former church.

The 1893 session frowned on horse-racing, owning of stock in companies, life insurance, musical instruments, "since it is not possible to glorify God by playing on a dead instrument," and political conventions. Young People's Meetings or Bible Readings, which were being started in various congregations were considered proper. The next conference urged them. It also resolved to put forth an effort for a general conference, a feeling for which was crystallizing among the Mennonites. Only "closed" communion was to be served.

The conference of 1895 considered it right for women to be Sunday School teachers but improper to fill the

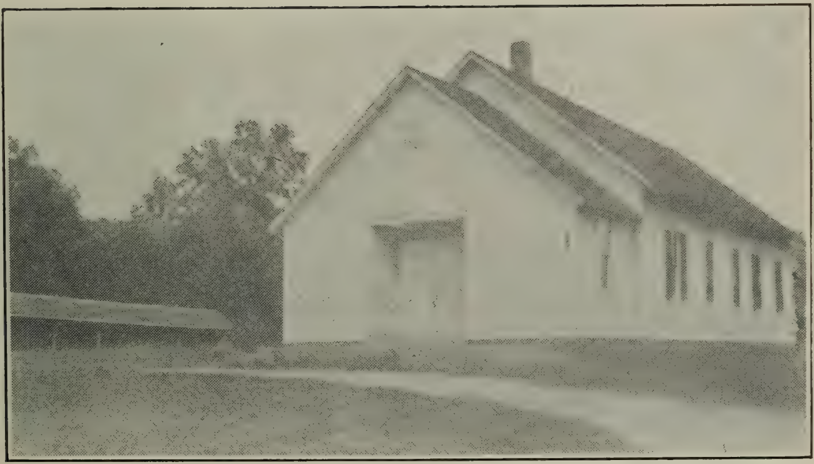


Partridge Mennonite Church, later Metamora

Metamora Mennonite Church

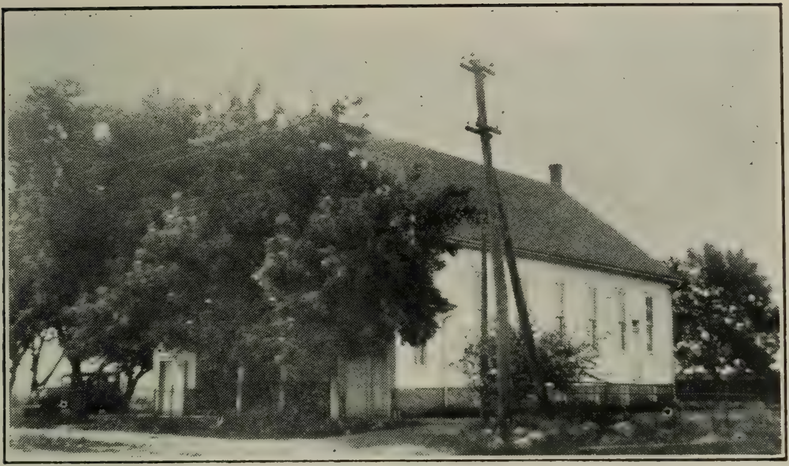
Roanoke Mennonite Church

Pleasant Grove Mennonite Church near Tremont

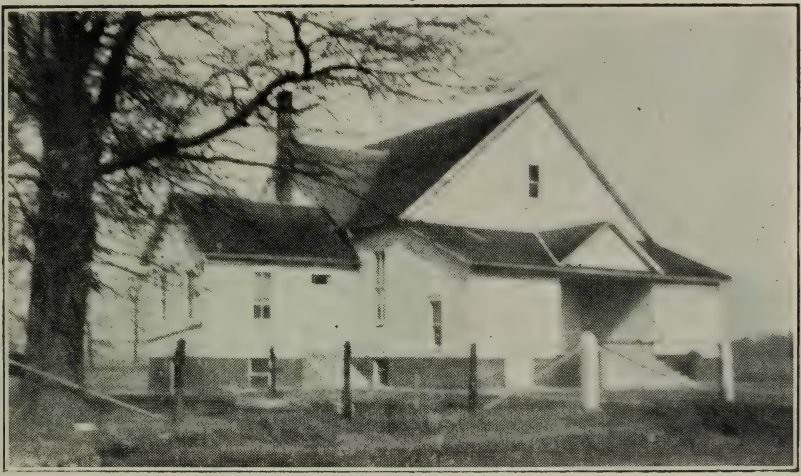


Willow Springs Mennonite Church near Tiskilwa

Hopedale Mennonite Church

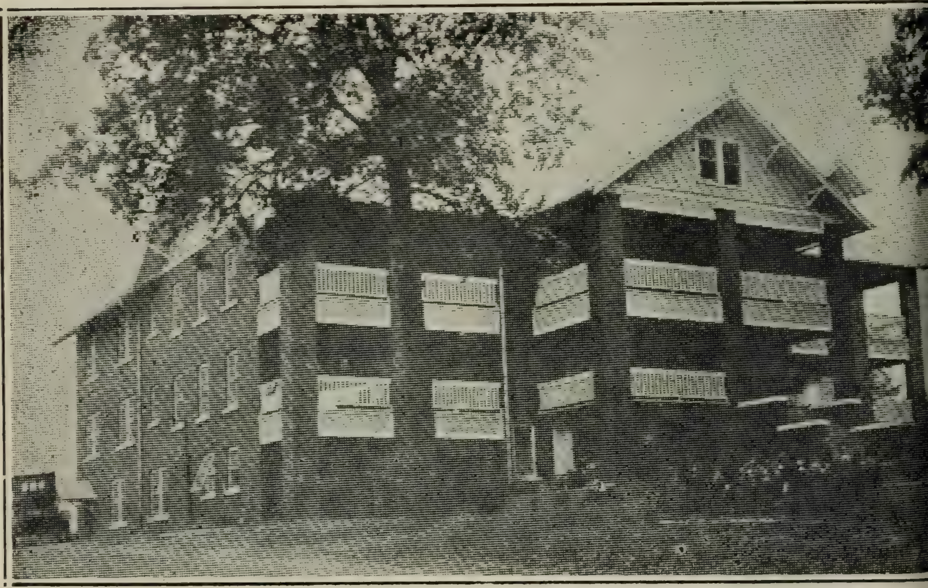


Waldo Mennonite Church near Flanagan



East Bend Mennonite Church near Fisher

Mennonite Gospel Mission in Peoria



Mennonite Home for the Aged near Eureka

office of superintendent or minister. High Schools were questionable. Up until the 1896 conference no real business was transacted. The meetings consisted chiefly of the discussion and answering of certain questions placed before the body. But in this year the Western District was divided into five sub-districts with a bishop placed in charge of each.

The conference of 1897 considered it out of accord with the gospel to coöperate with other denominations in Sunday School work or other religious activities. This is the first record to mention the matter of coöperation. Various committees reported at this session. The body favored a general conference for both Amish-Mennonites and Mennonites.

The conference of 1899, though not propagating Sunday School and Bible Conferences, nevertheless sanctioned them. A committee, the first on record, was appointed to adjust a difficulty existing in one of the churches.

The conference of 1900 approved the sending out of Home and Foreign Missionaries. The first record of the conference having appointed a delegate to the Indiana (A. M.) Conference was at the 1901 session. The conference report was ordered printed. The conference of 1902 considered its bishops as delegates to the General Conference. The conference of 1904 elected four representatives to the directors' meeting of the Board of Charitable Homes and Missions. The conference of 1905 decided to give support to the mission established in Kansas City and a trustee was elected to serve on its board. A proposal for making two conferences out of the Western District was rejected.

The 1906 conference took a "spiritual" attitude in regard to "an Aid Plan." Beginning with this session the first Western District Sunday School conference was held. These conferences continued to be held annually with the church conferences as long as the Western District remained intact. However, when the annual session was held in some distant territory, the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois coöperated with the Mennonite Sunday School conference held annually in that state. Eventually in 1919, the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois and the Illinois Mennonites held their first joint Sunday School conference.

The conference of 1907 appointed a member to the local board of the Chicago Home Mission. The 1908 conference approved the member that had been appointed on the Publication Board. The 1909 conference disapproved of property insurance and lightning rods, "Since we believe insurance and lightning rods have a tendency to weaken our trust in God and the money spent for them could be used to better purposes." Musical instruments were not to be used in the home.

The 1910 conference warned against the so-called Sleeping Preacher who had held meetings in Illinois.[7] The 1911 conference appointed a committee to have charge of the Sunday School conference. A suggestion to change the order of procedure at the annual session was rejected. Members were appointed to each of the Mission Committees for the sub-districts. It was customary for the ministers present at these conferences to give a word of testimony. Likewise the laity by rising to their feet bore testimony to the truth which had been spoken. Only the ministry was given the right to vote on questions and elect officers. The business was transacted in a meeting of the ministerial body before the conference program of sermons and inspirational addresses was given.

The 1914 conference commended President Wilson for keeping America out of the war. The ministerial body resolved to discontinue the sending of delegates to the Indiana-Michigan and Eastern Amish-Mennonite conferences and instead to give a hearty invitation to all conferences who are of one faith to unite with them in conference and encourage all to visit other conferences. The ministers listed as members for the session show many from outside the district.

---

[7] See Book V, Chap. LVI, "The Sleeping-Preacher Group."

The 1915 conference passed a motion that in future sessions of the conference, the first day be confined to a ministers' meeting for organization and arrangement of miscellaneous business. The conference sermon was to be preached and testimonies given in the evening session. The second day was to be devoted to the discussion of the questions in open conference.

At the 1916 conference the Amish-Mennonite meeting house at Arthur was reported sold since the congregation had been disbanded. The amount of $135.00 which had been received was divided equally between the Chicago and the Kansas City Missions. Three delegates were appointed to the General Conference.

The 1918 conference appointed a member to the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers. The beginning, in an official way, of conference merging is shown in this resolution:

"Whereas the congregation at Calkins, Montana, is so located geographically that they can more conveniently be shepherded by the Missouri-Iowa Mennonite Conference, they request that they be released from this conference to unite with the aforesaid sister conference.

"This request resulted in an interesting and lively discussion of the geographical situation of the Western Amish-Mennonite Conference District; and how, instead of releasing these congregations from time to time, a closer union might be effected with sister conferences which are one with us in faith and practice and which cover the same territory. A unanimous sentiment was expressed in favor of a closer and more effective coöperation in the future. With these things in mind the request of this congregation was granted."

The 1919 conference discussed the inspiration of the Bible which was answered as being "plenary and verbal," that is, that the whole message is inspired extending to the very words and that the whole book from Genesis to Revelation is inerrant, authoritatively conceived in divine wisdom, bringing to the world God's complete and revealed will concerning man; sufficient for all time. This leaves no doubt as to where the conference stood on the question of "Modernism" which was then coming to the forefront as a theological and religious issue. A committee was appointed to draw up "dress regulations." The conference looked with disfavor upon the world-wide movement for church federation which was then at its height. Upon the question of merging and redistricting of the Western Conference the following answer was given: "Resolved that we look with favor upon such action, provided it can be done satisfactorily to our membership. To this end we favor the appointment of twelve brethren who are to confer with similar committees appointed by the other conferences; that they investigate the question and the issues involved and bring their report to the next meeting of the conference for further consideration and action." The twelve men who were appointed consisted of the following brethren: Amos Troyer, C. R. Gerig, Fred Gingerich, Peter Kennel, Joseph Zimmerman, N. Birkey, L. J. Miller, Simon Gingerich, A. G. Yoder, Samuel Gerber, John C. Birky, and C. A. Hartzler.

The last Western District Amish-Mennonite conference was held September 9 and 10, 1920 at Tremont, Illinois. Short Bible Normals for the purpose of giving definite Bible instruction, as suggested by the Illinois Conference of Mennonites, were sanctioned. The plan for the merger as reported by the merger committee was accepted.[8] However since final arrangements had not been made and also because the Mennonites were with them in meeting the conference transacted its business as if it were to continue in operation. A general Sunday School secretary for the district was elected.

The eight Amish-Mennonite congregations in Illinois who were members of the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference as described above will now be treated in their order of origin; namely, Metamora and Harmony, Pleasant Grove near Tremont, Willow Springs near Tiskilwa, Roanoke, Goodfield, Hopedale, Waldo near Flanagan, and East Bend near Fisher.

---

[8] The merger of the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois and the Illinois District of American Mennonites is treated more fully in Chapter XXXV, The Conference Merger.

CHAPTER XXI

THE METAMORA AND HARMONY CONGREGATIONS[1]

When the original Partridge Creek or Spring Bay congregation[2] moved eastward it became the "Metamora" Church, the name of the township in which it is located. In former years it was known as the Partridge Amish-Mennonite Church because it was an outgrowth of the Partridge Church. The name was shortened later, and the church referred to simply as the Amish-Mennonite. The term "Amish" was dropped when the Amish-Mennonite and Mennonite Conferences united in 1920.

The first settlers in this community were immigrants from Alsace who arrived in 1831, and located along Partridge Creek, between Spring Bay and Metamora. Among these were Joseph Belsley and John Engel. In 1833, more immigrants came and joined this small colony. In this group were Christian Engel (father of John), Peter Engel, and John and Joseph Virkler. These settled near Metamora. In the same year another Joseph Belsley, Christian Smith, and John Kennel settled near Spring Bay. Between 1834 and 1850, many more immigrants came such as the ancestors of those families now bearing the names of Schertz, Bachman, Naffziger, Litwiller, Camp, Summer, Gerber, Oyer, Springer, and Imhoff. These people sought religious freedom and a home where military training was not compulsory. The Partridge community was comparatively easy to reach. The settlers came by way of Pennsylvania, down the Ohio river, thence up the Mississippi and Illinois rivers to Peoria and Spring Bay. Others came by way of New Orleans up the Mississippi river.

---

[1] Material from files of *Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Herald;* C. Henry Smith, *Mennonites of America;* interviews and correspondence with a number of the members of the Metamora Church; and manuscript from Arthur Smith, Eureka, Illinois.

[2] Concerning this early church see Book I, Chaps. VIII, X.

The church was organized by Bishop Christian Engel, in the home of his son John Engel, one mile west of Metamora, in 1833. Services were held in the homes until 1854, when the brick Partridge church was built. Christian Engel was the first Amish bishop in America west of Ohio. He was ordained bishop in Alsace, and came to Illinois in 1833, where he lived with his son John, one mile west of Metamora. For three years he was the only bishop of this settlement. He died in 1838.

The Partridge settlement, which is the foundation of the present Metamora church, held services in its church house until a new church was built in 1889 one and one-half miles east of Metamora. Occasionally thereafter services were held in the old brick Partridge Church but it was finally deserted. The ground on which the Metamora Church stands was donated by Christian Camp. This church alternated services with the Roanoke Church until the Harmony Church was started. In 1911 a new building was erected on the same location.

The following is a list of bishops,[3] ministers and deacons that have served in the pulpit down to the present time:

Bishops

Andrew Bachman
Joseph Bachman
Peter Beller
Christian Engel
Joseph Engel
Christian Esch
John Gingerich
Peter Gingerich
John Naffziger
Joseph Mourer
Andrew Schrock

Ministers

Andrew Ebersole
Christian Garber
Peter Garber
Peter Gingerich
Christian Schertz
Henry R. Schertz
Peter Schertz
Peter Sommer

Deacons

Joseph Belsley
Christian Naffziger
Edward Oyer
Joseph D. Schertz
George Sommer

---

[3] Biographies of the early bishops will be given as far as available in the biographical section at the end of the book.

The ministers were formerly chosen by lot, now being voted in by the congregation. Candidates are chosen by the ministers, and then left to the vote of the congregation for the final choice. Office is held for life if the person does nothing contrary to the principles of the church. In cases where some offense is committed, the office may be taken away by the congregation.

The first Sunday School was started about 1883 in the Partridge Church. It was held in the afternoon, the first session being led by Emanuel Hartman. The school had no lesson helps but merely studied from the Bible. There was much opposition when the Sunday School first began but this has changed since. Due to lack of interest in the afternoon meetings they were soon changed to the morning and preceded church services.

The Sunday School at present is much interested in mission work. Certain classes support Bible women in India while individuals support orphans. The Sunday School as a whole gives annually a definite amount towards the support of C. D. Esch, medical missionary in India. One of the most active Sunday School workers in the Metamora church was Joseph D. Smith. He was superintendent of the Metamora Sunday School at various times for 25 years. Henry R. Schertz was also an active superintendent.

Sunday evening meetings were not held in the Partridge Church. Shortly after church services began in the Metamora Church, Sunday evening services were introduced. George H. Sommer was the first superintendent. There was some opposition to these meetings for a number of years, but never enough to cause them to be discontinued. They came into favor gradually. The purpose of these meetings was to give the young people a chance to explain or talk about some part of the Bible. The attendance varies from 30 to 100. The meetings are considered quite successful. Many have become interested in church activities by the opportunities afforded them at these "Young People's Meetings."

The first sewing meeting, known as the Harmony Sewing Circle, met at the home of Ferdinand Schertz, December 5, 1907, for the purpose of preparing clothes for the poor, to be distributed by the city missions. The circle met for several years and then was discontinued for a time. In 1918 a circle was formed with the women of the Union Church near Washington and for that reason it was called the Union-Metamora Sewing Circle.[4]

The church attempted to hold regular meetings on certain evenings during the week but never succeeded. For instance in 1914 meetings were held on Wednesday evenings at the Harmony Church. A small book was studied which outlined the lives of noted Bible characters. They were called Bible Study meetings. Owing to the small attendance, which was from 15 to 30, they were discontinued.

The Metamora Church was a charter member of the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference and continued active in the Conference until that was disbanded. It then became a member of the Illinois Mennonite Conference. It supports the General Conference in every way. The Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference was never held at Metamora. Before the conferences were merged and when the Mennonite Conference was held at the Union Church near Washington the Sunday School part of the conference was held at the Metamora church.

Although the church has grown during the past twenty years its growth was not as great as it should have been. No doubt the strict church discipline has resulted in the loss of some of its members who joined Central Conference churches. The present membership is two hundred seventy-six.

---

[4] See Book II, Chap. XIII.

When the New Amish came to Illinois in 1852 a few of the Partridge members left the church and joined that movement. On the whole however the Partridge Church was not seriously disturbed by them. In 1868 a Central Conference Mennonite Church was formed near Washington, later known as the East Washington Church (now Calvary Mennonite),[5] by Joseph Stuckey. This took a number of members from the original Partridge Church.

For many years services were held every other Sunday. On the intervening Sundays the services were conducted at the Roanoke church house. The Metamora and Roanoke congregations together purchased an old Baptist church seven miles north of Eureka in 1905. The next year it was rebuilt and called the Harmony Church. When the Roanoke congregation built its new church house it left the Harmony work in charge of Metamora. Services were regularly held each alternate Sunday in the Metamora church. On intervening Sundays the congregation divided and one part met in the Union Church near Washington and the other in the Harmony Church. In 1929 both Harmony and Union meetinghouses were closed.

---

[5] See Book IV, Chap. L, the Illinois Congregations of the Central Conference.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ROANOKE CONGREGATION[1]

Another part of the Bloomington-Peoria settlement of Amish was made along the Mackinaw river beginning in 1829.[2] The settlers came from Ohio, Alsace-Lorraine and Germany. The rich fertile prairie land of this district was the chief inducement. Among the early settlers were David Schertz, John and Christian Risser, Peter Belsley, Peter Kennel, Christian Yordy, Joseph Rediger, John Tischer, Joseph Birkey, Christian Schrock, and Joseph Zentner. In the early days the best market was Peoria, some twenty miles distant. Later in the sixties the Streator-Pekin branch railway passed through Roanoke and Eureka, and also the Toledo-Peoria and Western Railway through Eureka, which made marketing facilities much better. The public highways, especially in wet weather, were unspeakably poor. The farm machinery was all of the simplest type, and as improvements were made, gradually came into use among these sturdy, thrifty settlers.

The congregation, formed soon after the settlement began and called the Mackinaw meeting, covered an extensive territory on both sides of the river and farther north than the present town of Roanoke. The Rock Creek Congregation[3] under the leadership of Jonathan Yoder began to meet separately as it was more convenient, and developed an independent existence. The Mackinaw meetings were held in the various homes in rotation. When the Rock Creek Congregation relocated north of Danvers in 1872 the southern portion of the Mackinaw Meeting used the old church of this group. The other portion continued to meet in the homes. This led to the creation of two congregations. The same preachers ministered to both congregations during the formative period.

---

[1] Information about this congregation from R. J. Schertz and C. F. Derstine aided by Joseph Yotty, C. S. Schertz, and Peter Schertz; files of *Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Herald.*

[2] See Book I, Chap. VIII, "Creek Settlements."

[3] See Chap. XLVIII.

Bishop Christian Ropp of Hudson, at a meeting one Sunday in the grove on the David Schertz farm near the present site of the church, proposed the idea of building another church for the members in the vicinity. A vote was taken and carried with but one dissenter. Peter Ulrich said he would refuse to cross the door sill should the new church be built. It is interesting to note, however, that not only did he pass over the sill which he had so seriously denounced, but he actually became an active worshiper.

The church was built during the summer months of the year 1875 and was dedicated the latter part of August of the same year. The builder of the church was James Smith from Washington, Illinois. Christian Schertz donated an acre of ground for the site. This building was replaced by a fine new brick structure in 1920. It is a very practical and useful building for worship and Bible School. This church edifice was erected with the idea that it was not consistent to build useful barns and fine homes, and retain a second-rate building for the service of God. The idea in construction was neatness, utility, and service, avoiding the elaborate and showy. The building has a high ceiling with good acoustics, containing a small side room which can be used to accommodate the overflow whenever necessary. It also contains a mother's room with the necessary equipment for the convenience of the mothers and the comfort of the children. There is a spacious basement with one room which is used for Junior meetings, also rooms for the convenience of men and women, and a primary room for the youngsters. Large entrances make ease of entrance and exit possible at two places.

Jacob Zehr, the coöperating bishop, was considered bishop of the Mackinaw congregation, and Christian Ropp bishop for the Roanoke congregation. The first minister serving the congregation before the church was built was David Schertz. In 1867, Christian Risser, Senior, and Joseph Wagner were ordained to the ministry at Christian Schrock's place, a short distance east of where the church now stands. Risser died at Eureka, January 14, 1923, at the age of 103 years. He was an active worker in the church during the entire fifty-six years of his ministry, with the exception of four years which were spent in Missouri with his daughter, and his last few years because of his advanced age.

Christian Schrock was chosen deacon, and Joseph Rediger minister. They both moved away later. Peter Zimmerman was then ordained to the ministry. He moved to Kansas and Missouri for a time, but later returned to Roanoke and was again minister till about 1906, when he went to Shelby County and was ordained bishop in the Sleeping Preacher Church. As his home church would not accept this ordination, he withdrew, and started in Linn township what is now called the Kennel or the Linn Conservative Amish Church.[4] He remained bishop of that congregation until his death.

In 1887, John Smith and C. B. Reisser were ordained ministers. A few years later Smith was ordained bishop, which office he filled faithfully until the time of his death, July 6, 1906. The Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference later appointed him bishop of all churches in Illinois that had no resident bishop. C. B. Reisser who had first been a deacon served as minister until a few years ago when the church silenced him for misconduct. He withdrew from the church and joined the Valentine Strubhar congregation, east of Washington, but not as minister. In 1895, C. S. Schertz and Peter D. Schertz were ordained ministers; both are still serving in this capacity. Ezra Yordy was chosen minister by vote, July 9, 1916. C. F. Derstine moved in from Pennsylvania in 1915, and in 1922 was ordained bishop. He moved to Kitchener, Ontario in 1924. Ezra Yordy was ordained to the office of bishop, September 11, 1925.

---

[4] In "The Sleeping Preacher Group," Chap. LVI, see the Linn Conservative Amish Congregation.

The ministers were elected either by ballot or by lot. Peter Zimmerman was selected by lot, John Smith and C. B. Reisser by ballot and lot. There being four candidates in the ballot, it was necessary to use the lot, Smith and Reisser being thus chosen. C. S. Schertz and Peter D. Schertz were elected by ballot. Ezra Yordy was also selected by ballot while Derstine was selected by lot when ordained bishop.

Three men were elected to have charge of the church property. These men were called trustees. David Ulrich and Joseph Zentner were two of the first who served in this capacity. Ulrich served 22 years, and Joseph Zentner served until he moved to Champaign County. Christian Wagner and Joseph Wagner served many years as trustees. In 1910, it was decided to change the date of the annual business meeting which was always held on Thanksgiving day, to the first Saturday in December. The three trustees were each to select a man as candidate for trustee. These three being voted on, the one receiving the highest number of votes was elected for three years. The outgoing member's name was never to be chosen. Thus the same man did not serve two terms in succession. Each member was elected for three years, only one term expiring at the end of each year. At the close of each business meeting the chairman and secretary were chosen for the next year. Money to meet the expenses of janitor, coal, light, and other things was secured by assessment on every member of the congregation. The church in general is very willing to help the ministers financially by giving money and supplies or by buying fuel. The sewing circle does sewing for the families of the ministers. The church responds very well to calls for help for various causes.

About the year 1882, an effort was made to start a Sunday School with Peter Zimmerman as superintendent, but the attempt was unsuccessful and the school died after a few meetings were held at the church. The second attempt was made in 1883 with Joseph Hauder as superintendent. It again died, since the elder members thought that the younger generation was introducing something new. Sometime later, Sunday School organization was actually begun and continued from that time on. The original promoters of the Sunday School were: C. A. Schertz, John Smith, Joseph Hauder, P. D. Schertz, and Peter Zimmerman. The first teachers were: Joseph D. Schertz, Lena Dellenbach, Joseph Wagner, Sr., Mrs. Lena Schertz, Christian Yotty, David Ulrich, and Christian Schertz. There were eight classes and seventy-four pupils. All the classes were conducted in the German language, as it was thought expedient that each pupil should be able to read German. The Sunday School met every other Sunday, the sessions being held in the forenoon. The Sunday School attendance has grown gradually until to-day it is about two hundred. The school is not now engaged in extension or mission Sunday School work. In the summer of 1923, a small Sunday afternoon class was started at the Centennial Chapel, a church about four miles from Secor, Illinois whose doors had been closed for some years.

Sunday evening meetings were first held in 1901. There has been no opposition to these services. These services were Bible study meetings, and have not changed to any great extent. A superintendent has charge of the meeting on these occasions. The attendance ranges from 60 to 80. It is very successful as all the young people, with a very few exceptions, and some old people attend, regularly. It gives each one a chance to take part in the services, and in that way creates interest. It also gives the members a better knowledge of the Bible.

Bishop John Smith rendered noteworthy service to this church and locality, and it is very appropriate that something be added to this chapter concerning his useful life. He was born November 27, 1843, in Worth Township, Woodford County, Illinois. His father, Christian Smith, emigrated as a young man from Alsace to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1829, and in 1833 joined the Amish-Mennonite settlement which had been started on the Black Partridge Creek in Woodford County, Illinois, a few years before. In his boyhood, John experienced all the hardships of pioneer life, his early years being spent on his father's farm. In the summer he helped to sow the seed and reap the scanty harvest; in the winter he was in the woods cutting down the trees and digging out the stumps. Being the only son, he could not well be spared from the farm and so his opportunities for education were few. Like most of his contemporaries, he spent only a few short winters in school.

He grew to manhood just in time to be subject to the military draft in 1864, and in company with several others was compelled to go to Springfield to prove that he was an "Amishman" in good standing thus being entitled to the benefits of the exemption clause which Congress had passed in favor of non-combatants.

In 1865 he was married to Magdalena Schertz of Worth Township, who died January 25, 1898. Shortly after his marriage he located on a farm which he had purchased three miles east of Metamora, Illinois. Here he spent the greater portion of his life and reared his family. In November, 1899, he married his second wife, Mrs. Lydia Albright. The next year he moved to a new home he had built one half mile west of the old homestead, where he died very suddenly of heart failure on July 6, 1906.

He was ordained to the ministry in 1887 by Bishop Christian Ropp, at the Roanoke church, and a few years later was elected by the church as bishop. The duties of his office often bore heavily upon him but he remained faithful to the trust committed to him.

He was a man of slight education but with a good deal of practical wisdom, wide experience, and sane judgment. These qualities, together with his kind heart and peaceful disposition, brought him into demand as a peace maker in church quarrels. He often officiated in that capacity among the brotherhood, especially in the western states. He was talented with more than ordinary executive ability, and in his circle he was usually considered a leader, not only in matters of religion, but in temporal affairs as well. His advice was often sought by his neighbors as well as by his brethren. In the faith and doctrines of the church he was sound, and by nature conservative, although liberal-minded enough to accept departures from the old order, when convinced that such changes would aid the welfare and progress of the church. He had the confidence of the young people and enjoyed being in their company. He took an active interest in the Sunday School and Young People's meetings seldom failing to be present at the services. In his later years Smith devoted nearly all of his time to the work of the church. As the other bishops of the state grew old and feeble, or died, their congregations were often placed in his charge. In this way he was chosen bishop successively of the congregations at Flanagan, Mackinaw, Tremont, and Arthur, in addition to the home congregations of Roanoke and Harmony. Several years before his death all the congregations in the state, not otherwise provided for, were placed in his care by the Western District Conference.

Much of his life and thought was given to these churches, but he found time to visit the brotherhood in other states. His voice was often heard in behalf of the gospel in Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Indiana, Ohio, and occasionally in other states. He was never idle, in fact the last day of his life was very active, a day that in many respects formed a fitting close to an active and useful life. He had always enjoyed the best of health, strong, and robust, never knowing illness, and his sudden departure was a shock to the entire community. The funeral was largely attended. Fully fifteen hundred people came from far and near to pay their last respects to their departed friend and brother.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GOODFIELD CONGREGATION[1]

The Goodfield Congregation was an outgrowth of the remnant of the Mackinaw Meeting after the Rock Creek and Roanoke congregations had been organized from the original colony.[2] This remaining part of Mackinaw Meeting, a little before the time that Roanoke built its church in 1875, began to use the old Rock Creek church abandoned by that congregation which had erected a new building north of Danvers. The first settlers had located along the Mackinaw River in 1834. The first settlers in the immediate Goodfield community came about 1842, many others arriving in 1852 and 1853, most of them coming from the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania. They came to better their conditions in agriculture, land being new and cheap. They endured many hardships, railroads being almost unknown and far away. They settled mostly along the river or in the timbered parts, the land having to be cleared of the then existing heavy trees. The prairie land was thought to be wet and unhealthy to live on. Some of the early settlers were the families Forney, Ropp, Reiser, Zehr, Yoder, Sommer, Ehrisman, Klopfenstein, and Schertz. The first settlers induced some of their relatives to move from older settlements, but no large groups came in at any one period. The town of Goodfield itself did not come into being until 1888, when the Lake Erie and

---

[1] Information furnished by Jacob Wolber, Deercreek, Illinois, also files of *Gospel Herald.*

[2] Concerning the Rock Creek congregation of Jonathan "Yony" Yoder see Chap. XLVIII. Concerning the Roanoke Congregation see Chap. XXII.

Western Railroad, now owned by the Nickel Plate Railroad, was built through that section of Woodford County.

The church house mentioned above was located at the eastern border of the congregation, and among "The Stuckey people." The Western members decided they wanted a church house nearer their homes, and not wanting to hold church in their houses any longer, demanded that a church house be built. At a meeting in the rented church, the matter was brought up and as it was decided to build a church house to be located as nearly in the center of the then existing congregation as possible, the present site was selected. Three trustees were chosen to serve as a building committee, Andrew Ulrich, Joseph Zehr and Jacob Wolber. There was no one from outside the state present at this meeting. Bishops Christian Ropp and Jacob Zehr, and preacher Christian Risser were ministering to this church at this time. An acre of ground located at the edge of the timber wooded with hickory trees, was bought in the spring of 1883 at a cost of $50.00. The house, of timber with a brick foundation, dimensions 28 by 38 feet, and a council room 12 by 14 feet in the rear, was erected in 1883. The council room is now used as a Sunday School room for children. Later on an addition for cloak rooms was built on the front, 7 by 28 feet. The dedication services were held on the first Sunday of the year 1884. The church seats about 175 people. Not many sheds were built for carriages, because of the fact that the house was located in a grove where there was a natural windbreak. There is very little use for such sheds now as very few horses are driven to church at this time.

The first ministers of this church were three in number: Bishop Jacob Zehr, Bishop Christian Ropp, and Christian Risser. These same brethren ministered to the Roanoke congregation. They were natives of the original Mackinaw congregation. Ropp died in 1896, and Zehr in

1898. Risser died in 1923, at the ripe old age of 103, still assisting in the ministry of the Roanoke church. Several other ministers were chosen at this church among them being Peter Zehr, who moved to Fisher, Illinois, where he started the new East Bend Mennonite Church[3] in Champaign County, and Solomon Yoder who moved to Douglas County, Illinois, after a short period of service. At the same time that Yoder was ordained, Christian King was ordained, who is still in the work. Daniel Zehr was later ordained to the ministry. On account of the age of the above brethren, a young man, Jacob Zehr, was ordained in 1895, and is the present active pastor. He speaks in the English language while the two former preached in the German. The church was in need of this as the young people did not understand German.

The church property is under the control of three trustees. The building committee which was chosen for the erection of the church continued to serve as trustees, and held this office without change for a long time. A change was then made and a trustee now holds office for three years only, so that each year on Thanksgiving Day a trustee is elected or reëlected. This church has no constitution or by laws, and there is no general committee which tries to correlate the various departments and activities of the church. Money is provided for expenses by an assessment of the members, each member being assessed the same sum. The minister receives no financial help, but in case he needs help, donations are given, so he does not suffer from want. This church has always helped as much as possible, but the membership not being financially well off, no great help is expected. In proportion to their wealth they respond as well as other neighboring churches.

This church went through the same changes of services and practise, as did the other churches before mentioned, hence nothing need be added here to outline the changes which took place.

---

[3] See Chapter XXVIII, East Bend Mennonite Congregation.

Soon after the church house was built a Sunday School was started. The first meetings were held in the church house, and were held in connection with the church work. The Sunday School has always been accepted as part of the church work. The first promoters of the Sunday School were Peter Zehr, Christian King, C. W. Fleiser, and a number of older members. It was first thought necessary to teach the young to read the German and to sing the German songs then in use, but this has been done away with, the English being used almost entirely. The first superintendent was Christian King. Many different men have taken active part in this organization since it began. C. D. Fleiser and Jacob Oyer have been superintendents for some time.

Evening services were started a few years ago. There was some opposition at first, due to various reasons. This has all been remedied, and matters run very smoothly. There is no preaching at these services, an opening prayer by the minister, singing and some Bible study and reading portions of the Scripture, constituting the services. A leader is appointed for the season who has charge of all of the meetings and arranges the programs. These Bible meetings, or Young People's Meetings as they are called, are only held during the summer months, as the members live too far away to assemble in the cold season of the year. All of the young people and children attend these meetings, their parents coming as often as possible. The young people desire to have these meetings.

There is no Sewing Circle connected with this Church at the present time, but following the war, one was conducted to make clothes to send to the needy. Sickness in the neighborhood brought it to an end, and it has not since been revived, though this organization did much good while in existence. The church has never attempted to hold any regular weekly meetings on any definite evening of the week, because the congregation is so small and scattered.

The condition of the public schools has been fairly good since the church first started. The parents did not send their children regularly as they did not encourage education, and, being all Germans, they were opposed to the school in English. It has only been a short time since these people ceased opposing the High School. In fact, many of them are still opposed to it, although some of the young people are now attending. The church has only two graduates, one of whom is teaching. Three others are now attending the High School. One graduate is attending college at Eureka, Illinois. The High School has benefited the church since those who have had a High School education can be used in the church to better advantage as Sunday School teachers and other officers. The majority of the people of the church are beginning to favor the High School. Some of the members have attended Goshen College, though no one has graduated as yet.

The church first became interested in missions about ten years ago. Communion is held twice a year by the Bishop appointed for this Church by the conference. There are no special services conducted on Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, or Rally day, and no social day is held by the church throughout the year. The Church has always been a charter member of the conference, as it is only a part of the old Mackinaw congregation. Not being able to accommodate the large number of people at this time, and because of the small membership, the conference has never been held in this church.

The church is very small due to the fact that there are strong churches in nearby towns. Christian Apostolic (New Amish) Churches are located at Mackinaw Dells and Goodfield where the latter has a very large membership.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PLEASANT GROVE CONGREGATION NEAR TREMONT[1]

The original Dillon Creek Congregation erected its first meeting house in 1879, in a rural area near Tremont, Illinois called Pleasant Grove. This has given it the name "The Pleasant Grove Church" though it is often called "The Tremont Church." The first families had settled in this region not later than 1833. Most of them came from Canada, traveling as did the Ropps by wagon and horseback, others coming from Butler County, Ohio, while still others came from Bavaria. The Schrocks, and perhaps the Heisers, came up the Illinois river, by way of St. Louis. Roads were made by merely cutting down the trees and driving around the stumps. The first settlers located in the timber land and started farming where there was only hazel brush, as it was less difficult to clear the land. The first fields were but an acre or so in area. Unless closely watched, herds of deer and flocks of blackbirds destroyed the crops.

The first houses were made of logs, brick homes and frame structures being built later. In later years, also, as the people began to drain the prairie land, many of these people moved out to new locations establishing other churches, such as those at Hopedale and Fisher.[2]

Oxen and horses were used for the farm work. Corn was planted by hand in rows made by a single shovel plow.

---

[1] Information for this chapter was obtained from Bishop Samuel Gerber, John Eigsti, Lester Litwiller, S. Jay Hostetler, and several others.

[2] See Chaps. XXVI and XXVIII.

There being no bridges, the streams were forded, the Illinois river being crossed by ferry.[3]

The first bridge resting on two tree trunks was built across the Kickapoo Creek in 1829. It was 164 feet long, and soon needed repairs. No railroads were established at this time. Some of the staunchest church members were slow to get carriages and top buggies because of the departure from simplicity although they were among the first to buy modern farm conveniences such as binders, mowers, and cultivators, as soon as they were available. Andrew Ropp, the first bishop, was one of the first to buy modern implements, while Jacob Hostetler was the first to buy a two-horse cultivator, which had runners instead of wheels. The community gradually increased by immigration from the three places before mentioned. Today, all roads are paved or oiled, being usable the year round. Railroad lines and grain elevators link the grain industry with the rest of the country.

Andrew Ropp was one of the promoters of the church building. The committee in charge was Daniel Roth, Christian Eigsti, Andrew Ropp, (not the bishop), and Joseph Ropp. They really were the trustees, but were not elected as such. The church ground was donated by I. W. Ropp under the condition that it should revert to the original estate when no longer used for church purposes. The building is of frame construction, painted white. It has two small cloak rooms. A small room, back of the pulpit, was originally built for a kitchen, but instead is used for a primary room, council room, or feet washing room as occasion demands. The seating capacity is about 150. The carriage sheds were built by the church, and then sold at an average cost price, about seven dollars, to the individual members, two being reserved for visitors. Some years later they were remodeled by the owners, the cost being shared equally.

---

[3] The following is a list of ferry charges over a century ago, which were probably about what the early settlers had to pay. These were taken from the "Peoria Star." Foot passengers, six and one fourth cents, man and horse twelve and one half cents, Dearborn sulky chair with springs fifty cents, one horse wagon twenty-five cents, four wheeled carriage with two oxen or two horses thirty-seven and one half cents, head meat cattle, horses, or mules, ten cents, hog, sheep or goat three cents, articles sold by bushel, rate per bushel three cents, and all other articles in equal and just proportions.

The church has its own burying ground, the land having been bought by five families and deeded to the church. As there was already a cemetery before this new cemetery was begun, some of the members objected to changing to a new one although it would be beside the church. The Bishop, however, favored the new one, so he, his children and their families procured the land and began to bury there. He deeded the land to the church, although this fact was not discovered until after his death. Opposition to it then ceased, and the burial ground was given the name of the church. There is a reserve fund to maintain the cemetery. The endowment at the present time is one hundred thirteen dollars. The interest on this, and the special offerings taken in the church, have served to maintain the cemetery.

The church was dedicated in the latter part of October, 1879, the dedication sermon being preached by Christian Reisser of Eureka. A. Slagel preached in the afternoon.

The ministers who have served this congregation are as follows: Andrew Ropp, the first minister and bishop, came from Canada to Pleasant Grove. He was the mainstay of this church for a long time, being a strong leader and helping the poor and the church with his money. He was followed by Peter Hostetler,[4] Peter Ropp, Andrew

---

[4] Hostetler biography. Peter Hostetler (—— ——) came with his father, from Bavaria in 1849, to the Dillon Creek settlement in Tazewell county. When the Wesley City congregation went over to the "Egli" deflection in the late Sixties, Hostetler cast his lot with them. He was ordained about 1870 and was later elected their first Bishop.

Birky, Daniel Roth, John Birky, a deacon Bachman, Joseph Litwiller, and Samuel Gerber, the present bishop. Gerber was ordained to the ministry on May 2, 1897, by John Smith and ordained as bishop May 21, 1911, by John C. Birky.

The members of the church are taxed for running expenses in proportion to the amount of government taxes they pay. This usually amounts to about five per cent of the government tax. Those who have no taxes are expected to pay about one dollar. The church makes no provision for the ministers. The church has no systematic budget system, and keeps no record of amounts given to missions or various other organizations. It supports no individual workers in the mission field, but contributes to the general mission fund.

The order of services was: Singing, Scripture reading and talk, prayer, singing, sermon, testimonies of other preachers and deacons, prayer, singing, dismissal. Until about ten years after the church was built the ministers always went into the "council room" while the first hymn was being sung to discuss matters, pray, and decide who was to preach.

From four to six instruction meetings are held before the baptismal service. These services, or instructions, are open to the public. They are begun by a short devotional service, the candidates then being given instruction in the Articles of Faith. The teaching is usually conducted on Sunday afternoons by the bishop and is in lecture form. Occasionally the convert may ask questions but this is seldom done in public. In former times, the converts were taken into the council room before the church services on Sunday morning for several Sundays. One special public meeting was then held during the week for instruction. A person is considered a church member after baptism upon confession of faith. Moving away, or staying away, does not dissolve membership. However it may only be discontinued by request of the member. Members are never excommunicated before first being visited. In every case in the past they have admitted their guilt before being banished. If excommunication is necessary, the fact is announced before the congregation. In cases where it is not clear whether the person should be excommunicated or not, the voice of the church is taken, or the decision of the Conference sought. For instance, when Dowieism was at its height, one of the ministers together with a number of others, left the church and joined Dowie. As some of these wished to retain their membership in their old church, the matter was brought to the Conference for decision. It decided to disown them.

The first Sunday School was started about 1880, the services being held every other week. Church services were held on alternate Sundays, a practice which had been started soon after the church house was built. The first meetings were held in the church. The promoters of the Sunday School were Andrew Ropp and Joseph Ropp. The ministers at the time were Daniel Roth, Andrew Ropp, Peter Ropp, and Bachman. Andrew Ropp was the first Superintendent and Joseph Ropp the first assistant. There were six classes, three for women, and three for men. The Sunday School attendance was never large. The older people, believing the Sunday School to be for the younger members only, did not attend.

The church membership is ninety-five, five of whom are under fifteen years of age, thirty young people, (both single and married), forty middle-aged people, and twenty older people. The present membership is as large as it has ever been. The membership of the church has not increased because Christian Apostolic (New Amish) churches and the Defenseless Mennonites (Egly), have taken a considerable number of members from the congregation. These congregations are almost entirely made up of former members of this church. Their departure from this congregation is perhaps due to the fact that the church lacked spiritual vigor. The new Churches apparently had more spiritual vigor, but also served to create greater spirituality in the old church. Some also joined the "Stuckey" Churches (Central Conference of Mennonites) near Washington.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WILLOW SPRINGS CONGREGATION[1] NEAR TISKILWA

The Willow Springs Congregation[1] near Tiskilwa, had its origin in a group of Bavarians, who settled in Putnam County, especially in the neighborhood of Hennepin, in 1835, where they had settled after coming directly from Bavaria, Germany. Some few had come from Butler County, Ohio. There was good land in the Hennepin neighborhood and it was easily approached by water. Practically all the newcomers settled in the Hennepin and Granville neighborhood, later moving across the Illinois River to Bureau County, near Tiskilwa, in 1836. Some of them also moved to Woodford County. Others went north to Ohio or North Prairie. Those who moved to Bureau County did so because land was cheaper. Joseph Albrecht, in the fall of 1836, was the first person to cross the river. During his search for a new home much rain had fallen. The river rose rapidly and flooded a large area making it impossible for him to return. For a period of six weeks he was left entirely to his own resources. He depended upon wild game for food which he cooked over an open camp fire. For shelter he depended upon a brush shed which he made between two trees. After arriving home safely he soon persuaded a number of his family to move to the new territory.

---

[1] Complete and carefully prepared information upon this congregation was furnished by Ira Eigsti, Buda, Illinois assisted by the following persons: Katherine Albrecht, John Albrecht, Henry Albrecht, C. A. Hartzler, E. I. Culp, Emery Sears, Ed. Springer, Joseph Springer, Ruth Smucker, Esther Smucker, and Mrs. John Smucker. An account of the Eigsti family is given in the June, 1923, *Christian Monitor*. Also see files of *Herald of Truth, Gospel Witness,* and *Gospel Herald.*

The early settlers in the new location were: Christian Albrecht and family, John Burkey and family, the Zierlein family, Joseph Ioder family, the Rockes, the Nafzigers, the Gingerys, and the Shetlers. The land was fertile and good crops were raised. Not knowing the value of the prairie land at first, they settled in the timber land. They cleared much ground and built small two-room log-houses. They cut the small grain with the cradle and scythe, threshing it with the flail. One horse plows were used until they moved out on the prairie, after which two and three horse or ox teams were used. Christian Albrecht, son of Christian, was the first to try the prairie, in 1850, finding this venture highly successful.

The people lived comfortably. Their grain gave them a medium of exchange, and they used it to secure necessary groceries and dry goods. There being no roads over the prairie, they went directly across country. Corn, oats, and wheat were raised, with wheat as the staple crop. They shipped the surplus, which was not much at first, to New Orleans by way of the Illinois and the Mississippi rivers. Jacob Albrecht wanted to try a different market, so took a load of wheat to Chicago in a wagon. This was more lucrative, but as the distance was too great, it was deemed inadvisable to continue these trips. Hennepin served as the regular trading center before Chicago was well developed and until the railroad was built. Very little live stock was raised, but the surplus was butchered, dressed, and taken to Hennepin. Some took their stock alive to the butchering house at Lacon.

In 1851 a saw mill, erected in Hennepin, prepared logs for house lumber. Some bought this lumber, others selected oak logs to be cut for the main timbers for the houses with pine for the siding. In 1852 the Rock Island

Railroad was built through Tiskilwa. This furnished a better outlet for the grain and live stock, and farming was begun on a more extensive scale. When the first settlers came, land sold for five dollars per acre, if secured from private parties, and for one and one-fourth dollars from the government. Young men hired out for nine dollars a month. These early settlers had debts when they first came, but after raising a number of good crops, and by carefully saving in many ways, they were able to clear themselves of their financial obligations. New families moved in from time to time, and the population increased. The land became occupied and the people scattered to the south, west, and north. They were very thrifty and prospered. Some owned as much as seven hundred acres at one time. Roads were built. The North Western Railroad built a line in the western part of this community near the Burlington Railroad already there.

This congregation is not an outgrowth of another but had its beginning in another locality. The same people who lived at Hennepin later lived in the Tiskilwa neighborhood. At first services were held in private homes every six weeks and later every two weeks. When a resident minister was obtained services were held every two weeks in schoolhouses, alternating between two places, Providence and Lone-tree.

The meeting for the purpose of organizing a church and building a house of worship was held at the Providence schoolhouse. A church site was finally chosen about half way between the two settlements, as a compromise between the group who wanted it at Providence and those who thought it should be at Lone-tree. The building was erected in 1873, on a plot of ground owned by Jacob Eigsti, situated in the timber about one fourth mile west of the Willow Springs Cheese Factory. The building committee consisted of David Musselman, Fred Zierlein, and

Andrew Burkey. The carpenter was Nauhein from Putnam. The house was a one room frame building, standing north and south, about forty-five feet long, its width being a little more than half the length, with a seating capacity of about two hundred and fifty. In the summer of 1896, lightning struck the building, burning it to the ground. The pulpit was carried out by a non-member living near the Church. A new building was erected that fall upon the old foundation. There were two ante-rooms or cloak rooms. This did not furnish enough room and the basement was not large enough, so in 1907 a small addition was built. The basement was then cemented.

Soon after the new house was built the congregation considered names for the Church. Some suggested calling it by the name of one of those most instrumental in having the building erected. Others objected, on the grounds that it would not be appropriate to name a church after a man. The name finally selected was "Willow Springs," which was considered appropriate because of a generous spring flowing in the center of a clump of willow trees nearby. The congregation is still known as the "Willow Springs Congregation," no change having ever been considered. Previous to the building of the new church there were several centers, one in the southeast known as "Lone-tree," another in the west by the name of "West Prairie or Providence," and that known as the "North Prairie or Ohio." Ohio kept its name, but the other two combined into Willow Springs.

Soon after the church house was built, a long shed with compartments was built for the carriages. In 1918, this was torn down and a new general shed put up. The first sheds were owned by individuals, each one having a particular stall of his own. At present the compartments are not restricted. This has proved more satisfactory.

The Church has its own burying ground, the two acres just north of the house being set aside for this purpose. Mary Ringenberg was the first one to be buried there. The church committee has control of the lots and each family pays for the digging of the grave. There are only a few non-members buried there. At present there are one hundred and twenty-nine graves.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church in Tiskilwa is a departure from this congregation. Practically all of the people who composed the first members of the Tiskilwa Church either belonged to Willow Springs or lived in the community.

The first minister in the Hennepin community was Jacob Burkey, a native of Hesse, Germany. He was well liked by the people, but had one outstanding weakness, a fiery temper, which overcame him occasionally. He came to Granville and preached whenever the people gathered together in the church building in town. He died at Granville. The next minister was Holly, also from the German provinces of Hesse. He first lived at North Prairie, and later moved to Granville. He was a very good man and was well educated, having received training in Germany. Sometime after he began his active ministry, some Brennemans from Germany settled in the Hennepin community. They did not believe in future punishment, and being on intimate terms with Holly, convinced him of their views. Holly left the church and joined them, thus leaving the small group of Mennonites without a minister, until the services of a Nafzinger were secured for a short time.

The people, however, still held to their custom of meeting for worship, and since they had no church house, they met in private homes. Michael Kistler,[2] a minister from Congerville, was asked to come up and preach for them, (1857). He came several times a year, although services were conducted by the deacon between Kistler's visits. Kistler also held services at Granville occasionally. He was a very liberal-minded man, and for that reason the bishops in Illinois refused to ordain him as bishop. During the time Kistler had partial control of this congregation, dress rules were not enforced. He was lenient in church government, permitting each member to do much as he pleased.

---

[2] See Chap. L, the Illinois Congregations of the Central Conference. The South Danvers Mennonite Church. The Tiskilwa Mennonite is treated in the same chapter.

Prior to his coming, whenever a member married a person outside the church they could no longer hold membership unless the other person joined the church also. Kistler permitted the members to remain, even though the one married did not belong to the Church. Before his arrival, Elizabeth Zierlein, who had been a member, was no longer permitted to commune because she had married a Lutheran. He reinstated her and received her children into the church by baptism, though her husband remained a Lutheran until his death. Kistler told the people they did not have to wear the hooks and eyes, and immediately after marrying a couple he told them he would have no objections to their taking part in dances. Since he was so liberal, some of the members refused fellowship with his church, and occasionally went down to Ropp's Congregation at Tremont. Kistler, however, had some loyal supporters. He preached good sermons, but after some years, the majority became so dissatisfied with him that he was forced to leave. Afterwards he left the Mennonite Church.

In the meantime, Andrew Ropp had been making trips to Bureau County. He lived near Pekin and belonged to the Dillon Creek (now Tremont) Congregation.[3] He started these trips in 1851 and conducted funerals, held baptismal services, and officiated at weddings and communion services. He did not preach east of the river at Hennepin, but made several trips to Ohio Station.

---

[3] See preceding Chap. XXIV.

When unable to come he sent someone else. He has been characterized by a few as a man who did more scolding, fault finding, and preaching on "dress," than preaching the Gospel. Yet many people were deeply attached to him.

Ropp could not accept Kistler's views, and asked all those who had been baptized by Kistler to be baptized again, so they could be considered members in full standing. With few exceptions the members agreed to this. Some did so in order to remain with their kinsfolk. Ropp considered Kistler an outlaw of the church, and would not permit any person who had been baptized by Kistler to commune until he had been rebaptized. A few refused and never rejoined, some never joining any church. Ropp came about every three weeks. The Tiskilwa people paid his carfare to Princeton. He baptized a large number.

Joseph Stuckey also came to Willow Springs occasionally to preach. He was a widely read man, not as liberal as Kistler, and yet not as strict as Ropp. Ropp finally made arrangements to have Andrew Zimmerman from Woodford County move to Tiskilwa in 1855. Zimmerman was only a minister and Ropp still came for special occasions. He lived at Ohio, Illinois, but soon stopped preaching and moved away.

Joseph Burkey, a minister in the Dillon Creek (Tremont) Congregation, then moved to a farm one half mile southwest of Providence in 1868. He had only three months' schooling, and that in Germany. He was ordained bishop in 1869. He was inclined to be strict, and believed it his duty to enforce the church rules. The sisters had to wear the veil and bonnet, the men being supposed to wear hooks and eyes on their clothing. Very few wore them, but as they could not be baptized unless they did so, they often borrowed coats with hooks and eyes to use for this ceremony. During his years of service, some of the young people began to show dissatisfaction because of dress regulations. Some of the young women did not like the idea of wearing distinctive garb, objecting to the bonnet and devotional covering. One man told his wife after having been to a public gathering that he would not take her out again to such occasions unless she wore something else because so many people pointed their fingers at her. The young women resented this attention and did not know what to do. They did not want to leave the church, neither did they want to wear hats at the public meetings, and bonnets to church. Some thought that would be "two-faced." Others took this as a solution to the problem. Some desired to do away with the bonnet and devotional covering entirely. They wanted to wear hats in the church house, instead of the prayer veil. The bishop would not permit this.

Jacob Ringenberg was ordained as minister to help Burkey in 1889 because Andrew Oesch, who began his ministry before the church was built, had left for Nebraska. Ringenberg was a kind-hearted man, avoiding all trouble, and never having any disputes with any one. He passed away in 1917.

A number of young women, belonging to families of the congregation under Burkey who were not members, desired to live the Christian life. They wanted to join with the believers at Willow Springs, but did not want to wear the bonnet and devotional covering. Before the bishop would baptize them they had to promise to abide by the church and obey all its rules. They felt they could not do this, so they were not baptized. Not desiring to affiliate themselves with any other denomination, they were without a church. This condition existed for ten or fifteen years. Some of the young women joined other denominations during this time. Those who did not were considered "lost sheep." The hope that another Mennonite church, slightly modified, would be organized was cherished by some.

Later, some of the young people who were not willing to accept all the practices of the church went to Peter Schantz, the Central Conference Bishop who lived at Normal, and were baptized. Some of the ministers of this branch urged a number of the dissatisfied members of Willow Springs to proceed and organize a church at Tiskilwa.[4] The parents of the children who were not willing to join the Willow Springs Congregation were anxious to keep their children in the Mennonite church therefore favored this plan. Among those who were the most active in effecting an organization were: Elizabeth Albrecht, and husband, Mr. and Mrs. John Schrock, Daniel Albrecht and wife, Katie Unzicker, and Mrs. Andrew Burkey. The ministers who urged it were Peter Schantz, Allen Miller, J. H. King, of Carlock, and Lee Lantz, a bishop and evangelist living at Normal, Illinois. In the fall of 1911 he came to Tiskilwa and held evangelistic meetings, later organizing a church, and baptizing a number at that time. The meetings were held in the town hall. A Sunday School had been previously organized on October 28, 1911. On November 23, the church was organized with a membership of forty, and on May 18, 1913, a new building was dedicated which is being used to-day. Bishop Burkey and other members of the church felt that this movement was entirely uncalled for and premature.

Chancy A. Hartzler moved from Garden City, Missouri, to a site near Willow Springs in February, 1913, to help in the church work. He was then a minister, and in the fall of 1914 Joseph Burkey ordained him bishop, in which capacity he is still devotedly serving. Ira Eigsti was ordained to the ministry on September 7, 1919, by Chancy Hartzler, and continues to serve.

When the church felt that a minister was needed, a vote was taken and the man who received the highest number of votes accepted the spiritual office. There was a rule in effect in Germany that this position had to be accepted by the one receiving the highest number of votes, and this seems to have been transferred to this country. When the members voted for a minister during the early history of the congregation, they picked out an honest man and looked more on the character than on the amount of education he had. Some did not want a man for minister who was well educated, because in their estimation, the more learning he had the worse he was, and was less fitted for the office. At the ordination a bishop preached, and then laid his hands on the head of the one to be ordained. This congregation has regularly followed the above described method.

---

[4] See Chap. L, The Illinois Congregations, The Tiskilwa Mennonite.

The bishop was overseer of the flock. He officiated at communion, baptism, marriages, funerals, and special meetings. The minister was to assist the bishop and be a minister of the Word to believers. He often gave testimony to the bishop's sermon.

The deacon took care of the funds for the poor, the members giving for that purpose whenever they felt like giving, the deacon distributing the money to those who needed it. To-day there is no fund for the poor, but when money is needed for that purpose it is taken out of the general church treasury. The deacon also took care of the church finances, and to-day gives an annual report at the business meetings. He visited the sick and assisted at communion services, gave testimony, and preached. The duties of these officers have not changed much. Joseph Albrecht was the first deacon to be ordained by a bishop from Partridge. He served from the time of Jacob Burkey until 1885, doing some preaching because on many occasions when the people met there was no minister present. He bought some books on preaching and studied so he could serve the people better when they asked him. He led in singing and if no minister was present, would read a chapter, pray, and speak. The people were deeply attached to him. Christian Sears was deacon after Burkey's services ended. Sears came from Bavaria, Germany, and settled in Woodford County. After serving as deacon a while he was ordained minister. He died in 1892. Henry Albrecht was ordained deacon by Bishop Burkey in 1892, and is still serving the church in this capacity.

Money is provided for the running expenses of the church by an assessment, made according to the State valuation taken from the tax receipts. The members have been paying two mills on the dollar for some time. Members that do not have any property give two dollars, minors give only one dollar. If the minister is in need or has large debts, the church takes steps to help. Individual members have given considerable help to the bishop. His hired man has been paid by the church for the last few years. The money for this was taken out of the running expenses. If the minister goes to the conference by rail his fare is paid out of the church treasury. The church responds quite liberally to outside calls for help though it does not have a systematic budget. A collection is taken monthly for the Chicago and Peoria Missions and another for general work. The District Mission Board made out a list of places to which to send the money, and the church has adopted this for their plan. Two missionaries to India from this congregation are supported by it.

As previously stated, the Willow Springs church house was built in 1873, and church services were held every alternate Sunday. Soon some of the members of the church became interested in Sunday School work, as a result of some of the neighboring churches having started such schools. The sponsors of the Sunday School were Andrew Oesch, Henry Bachman, and Joseph Burkey. It was then decided that Sunday School would be held every alternate Sunday and on the Sunday when no church services were held. Andrew Oesch was chosen as superintendent with Henry Bachman as assistant. Classes were organized and lesson helps and supplies were ordered from the Mennonite Publishing House at Elkhart, Indiana, published by John Funk. For the beginners a "Frage Buch" was used. The advanced pupils were given a "Bible History" book with literature and questions. All discussions and instructions were in the German language. German seemingly was never fluently spoken by the majority of the people, and as the years went by and the young people went to school the English gradually crept into the School until in 1885 English lesson leaves were ordered with the German.

From that time on the English increased and the German decreased, until to-day there is only one class using the German, the aged women's class, taught by Henry Albrecht. About 1890 the people decided to have Sunday School and church services every Sunday. Sunday School was held just preceding church, and each was to be in session half of the two hours. This plan seemed to meet the approval of every one and is still followed. The school grew gradually from a membership of fifty until to-day there are one hundred and seventy-seven enrolled. It has been conducted in much the same manner throughout the thirty years with a few changes to meet the increasing membership. In 1907 the church house was enlarged and room made for a primary department in the basement. Children from three to twelve years are enrolled in this department. F. I. Smucker was the first superintendent and remained in office for a number of years.

On the first Sunday of December the school meets to hold an annual election. This is done after the classes have had their discussions. The superintendents, secretary-treasurer, and chorister, are elected at this time. The officers take their regular places on the following January. The superintendents and a committee appointed by the school meet with the ministers and deacons from time to time and appoint teachers for the classes. The following list gives the names of those who have acted as superintendents of the Sunday School: Andrew Oesch, Henry Bachman, John Ringenberg, Henry Albrecht, John Eigsti, John Smucker, Henry Stauffer, Jake Stauffer, John Stauffer, August Schertz, Edwin Older, Joe Ioder, Ben Rocke, Alvin Smucker, Edward Springer, Walter Grey, Omar Staufter, Otto Ringenberg, Frank Smucker, Emery Sears, Fred Weilder, Henry Miller, E. Kauffman, and Carl Magnuson.

Sunday evening meetings were first held soon after the church house was built. Various subjects were discussed. Sometimes the leader assigned subjects, and sometimes a number were given slips with references on them to read and give comments. The people did not respond very well, and after a year no meetings were held evenings. In 1912, evening meetings were again started, and regular Young People's Meeting programs were conducted. So few attended that it was decided to meet every other Sunday evening. In 1923 the plan of having Young People's Meetings every Sunday evening was tried again, and still continues.

This congregation has a sisters' organization, called the Dorcas Sewing Circle, which was organized in the spring of 1907. Mrs. John Eigsti, Mrs. John Gingerich, and Mrs. Frank Smucker were the promoters. The purpose of the Dorcas Sewing Circle is to help the poor in the district and in the cities. The Sewing Circle started with monthly meetings. At present a meeting is held the second Thursday of each month at the home of one of the members. The Sewing Circle has been able to clothe many poor people in the city. It has supported a Bible woman in India, has helped clothe French and Belgian sufferers during the War, has given clothes to the Russian and German refugees, and has given some of the furnishings of the Old People's Home at Eureka, Illinois, besides furnishing one room at the Home Mission in Chicago. The largest membership at any time has been thirty sisters. The Sewing Circle is connected with the State Branch.

The church has not done much in the way of week day meetings. Different types of meetings have been conducted at various times, but none of them lasted for any great length of time. Various social gatherings are held from time to time.

The singing in the church was formerly in the German language and in unison. Only a few of the songs were written with notes. The singing was all congregational, and was led by any brother who wished to lead or could do so. Men always led the singing unless there was no man there that could. In that case a sister was given the privilege. Occasionally the songs were "lined" by the leaders and sung by the congregation a line at a time. There was very little change in the singing until about 1894 when F. I. Smucker of Nappanee, Indiana, located in the community. He was asked to do some leading and being able to sing better in English than German, the larger number of songs he led were sung in English. It was also about this time that four parts were first sung. From this time on there was more and more singing in English. There has been no German singing since 1918. People were very much opposed to musical instruments, but as time went on their thoughts changed, and there is no opposition to musical instruments in the home at the present time, though none is used in church.

In the earlier period of the church no special efforts were made to gain members aside from the regular preaching services, and such home teaching as was given by the parents. The same were the only means offered to induce spiritual life. In the beginning preaching services were held several times a year, later every three weeks. After the church house was built, it was changed to every second Sunday. Still later it was changed to every Sunday, and Sunday School was added, also Bible conferences, and Young People's Meetings. For several years there was a mid-week mission or Bible study class. The church plans to have evangelistic meetings at intervals of a year or so, but no definite time is adhered to in this matter. The Church holds instruction classes before baptism of converts. The nature and purpose is such as to give the applicants an understanding of what it means to be converted and born again, and also to have a general knowledge of the principles of the church. The converts are coming into the church much younger than in past years. There are eight boys and five girls under fifteen who are members. Thirty-four members are over fifty. The total church membership is about 200.

A few families settled near Ohio Station about 1840. They came from the Tiskilwa and Hennepin communities, because they could purchase land at a lower figure. The early settlers consisted of Jacob Albrecht, Christian Schantz, Christian Ringenberger, Andrew Schertz, Christian Saltzman, Nicholas Schertz, Andrew Zimmerman, Jacob Ioder, and Joseph Ackerman. About 1885 they began to meet regularly in the Red Oak School House with Sunday School every Sunday and preaching once a month by a minister from the Willow Springs Congregation. Before that time they had met at intervals in the homes. Sunday School was discontinued about 1915. There are only eight members at present living in this community. Occasional meetings are held for them. No congregation was ever organized and no meeting house was ever erected. There never was a resident minister. Thus the Ohio Station settlement never developed into a church.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HOPEDALE CONGREGATION[1]

The official name of this congregation is Hopedale Mennonite Church. Its original name was Delavan Prairie, this being the oldest of the prairie settlements in the state and being an outgrowth of the Partridge and Dillon Creek colonies. Preceding the merging of the Amish with the Mennonites of the state, it was known as the Hopedale Amish-Mennonite, and by the general public as the German Church, being the only one in this community teaching and preaching in the German language.

The first family settled in the community in 1854. Joseph Litwiller moved into the Orendorff brick house, which is still standing. The following year or soon after, various persons moved in, among whom were George Zehr, Noah Augspurger, Christian Martin, Christian and J. Nofziger. There were undoubtedly others who came about this time or a little later, but definite information is not available. They left the older settlements at Dillon Creek and other places, because the land was cheap. However, after investigating the conditions some went elsewhere, as they considered the ground unfit for cultivation, it being too moist and soggy. Many of the most valuable farms were then largely under water. Also, to market the grain long and difficult journeys were necessary. Fourteen cents per bushel for shelled corn was the market price at Peoria. The shelling was done by hand in some cases.

---

[1] The information contained herein was compiled by C. E. Martin with the help of the following brethren: Andrew Nafziger, Simon Litwiller, Benjamin Springer, Daniel Nafziger, J. W. Springer, Barbara Cripe, and others.

The pioneers were noted for their industry, frugality, and generosity. They did much to induce other members of the same faith to move in.

The meeting for organizing the congregation was held at the residence of Joseph Birkey. The increased numbers of church attendants soon required much more room than could be obtained in private homes. These services had been held every two weeks in connection with the members in the northern part of the county since 1854. In 1876 a church edifice was built two miles southeast of Hopedale, the committee in charge being Christian Nafziger, John Nafziger, and Christian Sutter. Two acres were conveyed by Christian Nafziger and wife February 1, 1877, to the trustees of the church namely: Christian Nafziger, John Nafziger, Noah Augspurger, John Egli, Joseph Birkey, Joseph Springer, Nicolas Martin and their successors for a consideration of $75 for the two acres.

The church building site was selected by a vote of the church members. The building is a wood structure, total length 50 feet, width 32 feet. The assembly room is 32 by 40 feet. One end of the building is used for cloak rooms and a ladies' rest room. The seating capacity was about 250. The building was erected at a cost of $1,800. In 1884 an addition was built on the rear, 20 by 24, which is used as a minister's council room and instruction room for applicants for baptism. In 1906 another addition, 24 by 28, was built to the assembly room on the south side, increasing the seating capacity by about 175, which cost $1,150.50.

The first minister of the church was Christian Nafziger. He was born in Hesse but later moved to Bavaria. He emigrated to this country in 1846, was ordained in 1855, and bishop in 1860. In the early days of his ministry he served the Dillon Creek Congregation also, as the early settlers on the Delavan Prairie were considered part of that congregation. As the former congregation gradually decreased, and the latter increased, his labors were largely confined to serving the Hopedale Congregation until his death in 1899. He was a man known for his pious life and helpfulness to the poor. He was a man of considerable influence. As bishop he discharged his duties kindly but firmly. It was during his term of office that the congregation made its most rapid growth.

In point of service J. C. Birky ranks next as bishop of the congregation. He moved in from Decatur County, Kansas, in 1896, where he had served as bishop. He served the local congregation in that capacity for twenty-four years. In looking through his records it appears that he baptized 340, and officiated at 83 marriages. The converts he baptized were at the following places: Pryor, Oklahoma; McPherson and Decatur Counties, Kansas; Wright and Cumming Counties, Nebraska; Arthur, Fisher, Flanagan, Goodfield, Tremont, Roanoke, and Hopedale, Illinois. He also ordained three bishops, three ministers, and one deacon. He was a man reserved in manner, and slow to answer, but always giving an answer which carried considerable weight. He was loved and respected within and without the church. After the death of Bishop John Smith the conference gave Birky the oversight of the churches of the state of Illinois. He died in 1920.

Joseph Springer also served this congregation for many years both as minister and bishop. Others who served as ministers were Joseph Litwiller, Simon Bechler, William Unzicker, Joseph Hostettler, J. Nafziger, Noah Augspurger, Andrew Birkey, Joseph Birky, Daniel Greiser, J. Birky, J. Egli, Joseph Egli. The present bishop is Simon Litwiller. The ministers are Daniel Nafziger and Benjamin Springer.

The control of the church property was vested in the seven brethren mentioned before. No successors were appointed until the year 1903 when the following three brethren were chosen: Andrew Nafziger, Benjamin Martin, and J. Nafziger. They were elected for three, two, and one year respectively. This arrangement allowed for one vacancy each year which is filled by ballot on Thanksgiving Day. Others who have served or are now serving are Simon Litwiller, J. W. Springer, and C. E. Martin. The expenditures of the church are in charge of the church treasurer appointed by the trustees and are taken out of a fund collected every Thanksgiving Day for that purpose. As the ministers are fairly well to do, nothing is done to support them. A collection is taken the first Sunday of every month for mission and charitable work. This is turned over to a mission committee of three, who decide where it is to be sent. Another fund is maintained for the needy of the congregation, also to pay the ministers and missionaries when called in to assist in special meetings.

The Sunday School was organized in 1885. Meetings were held in the church house every two weeks except the winter months. The first superintendents were Jacob Birky and Benjamin Martin. All the classes were conducted in German, but this was finally superseded by English. About 1900 the beginners were assigned to a separate room. Benjamin Litwiller served as the first superintendent of this group. From this time on more attention was paid to grading of the classes. In 1920 a young men's and women's Bible class was organized and has proved very successful. About forty are enrolled in each of these classes. During 1910 a teacher training class was carried on during the Sunday School hour but was not very successful. No further effort was made until 1921 when teacher's meetings and teacher's training classes were again undertaken. The former proved quite successful but the latter did not receive very much support. About 1916 an effort was made to have the Sunday School every Sunday. The question was voted on by the congregation but much to the surprise of the progressives it was defeated. Two years later it was again voted on and this time it was carried.

While this school has never developed any outstanding Sunday School workers, much credit is due to the workers and ministers of the past for their coöperation with each other and with the young people. There is a conservative element in this congregation but not radically so. There is also a progressive element but they are not too aggressive. Between the two, the church has struck a happy medium of advancement. There has been a gradual growth in attendance until to-day, in fair weather, the attendance runs up to 350. So seriously was the work hindered because of lack of room that a new building was erected in 1929.

Sunday evening meetings were first held about 1901. A number of the young, and a few older, brethren felt that evening meetings would be a step in the right direction. However the matter met with so much opposition that it was dropped. The next year it was agitated again with the result that Young People's Meetings were held in the afternoon, but this was soon changed to evening. The meeting is in charge of a leader, appointed to serve one month by a committee who have oversight of the Young People's Meetings. The committee also appoints a chorister who serves for one month. Other official duties are performed by this committee. The attendance averages about 150. These meetings have always been well attended and offer the young people an opportunity to spend their Sunday evenings in an atmosphere which is conducive to spiritual development.

Communion is observed twice a year. This is usually preceded by a council meeting. The previous Sunday the congregation is admonished to spend some time in fasting and prayer. A preparatory sermon is preached, leading up to the communion service. Before the close of the service, feet washing is observed. Thanksgiving day is always observed by a Thanksgiving service. All business pertaining to the upkeep of the church grounds, cemetery, janitor, and other items is taken care of at this time, and money is raised to defray expenses. Two sisters are appointed to look after keeping the house clean, trustees are elected, and any other business which it may be necessary to bring up is then transacted.

The first conference held with the Hopedale Congregation was one of the old Amish General Conferences held on the farm of Christian Sutter in 1875. When the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference was organized this congregation was a charter member. Two meetings of that Conference have been held in the church, one September 14, 15, 1894 and the other September 21, 22, 1904. When the Mennonites and Amish-Mennonites of Illinois merged, this congregation became a member of that organization. A conference of that body was held in the church September 12, 13, 1922. In the year 1916, a movement was started to organize an Amish Sunday School state conference for Illinois. This was accomplished, and the first meeting was held with this church in 1917. It was discontinued with the merging of the two bodies.

This congregation has had a sisters' sewing circle since June 15, 1918. The church was fairly well represented at the first meeting. It was the desire of the group to do all they could to help the poor and needy by giving their time, money, and service. Their aim was to help not only those who were in the cities or far off mission fields, but also those in the local community if such an opportunity presented itself. The first officers elected were Mrs. Kathryn Nafziger, president; Mary Good, vice-president; Barbara Birky, secretary-treasurer; and Phoebe Eash and Mrs. V. Nafziger, garment cutters. It was resolved that this sewing circle meet the first Thursday of each month at the Amish-Mennonite Church building. There being no basement, it was decided to use as the sewing room an adjoining room which is built on the west side of the church edifice. This sewing circle is connected with the Illinois Mennonite branch of Women's Sewing Circles.

The congregation at this place, like all non-resistant bodies, was loath to see her young men drafted into the service. Not many were taken from this congregation and those that were drafted did non-combatant work and encountered no serious difficulties. There were those in the community that felt it unfair that the Mennonite boys were exempt from military service when their own boys were sent to the front, but no violence was resorted to. The fact that the local congregation was liberal in relief work did much to increase the good feeling.

This congregation has always been considered one of the most conservative, especially in methods of work and equipment. However, having once adopted some forward step, there is usually splendid coöperation and freedom from factional strife. In 1900 when the Central Conference of Mennonites organized their congregation and erected a church house nearby, a number of the more liberal members left the church to join them.[2]

---

[2] See Chap. L, "The Illinois Congregations."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WALDO CONGREGATION NEAR FLANAGAN[1]

The settlers in this district came mostly from Tazewell, McLean, and Woodford Counties, and settled on the Gridley Prairie about 1860. At that time it was quite a new venture to move away from the streams and woods to the open prairie, where there were no roads, no fuel or building material, and no shelter from the winter's cold. They were induced to come in by the areas of unsettled land which could be had for almost nothing. Farming was difficult at first, because the prairie sod was very hard to break and to get into condition to produce. The land is quite level, and there were few ditches to carry off the surplus water, so that the low spots were very wet in the spring. Often a crop could be produced only on the sloping hillsides, which drained naturally. Often there was barely enough raised to feed those who were raising the crops. The first attempts to improve this condition were by making ditches to carry off the water in the spring. This helped considerably, and made much more of the land tillable early enough to produce a crop. The later remedy—that of laying tile several feet below the surface, and running them to the ditches and natural streams, was the foundation for the prosperity that came after years of struggle with this problem.

The official name of the church is the Waldo Mennonite Church. The first part of the name originates in the fact that it is located in Waldo Township. It was formerly called the Waldo Amish-Mennonite Church, but when the Mennonite and Amish-Mennonite congregations in the state of Illinois were reorganized into one conference, the name Amish was dropped. It is sometimes still called the Amish Church by people who are uninformed.

---

[1] Information furnished principally by Arthur W. Slagel, assisted by D. W. Slagel and Mrs. E. H. Smith of Flanagan, Illinois, also files of *Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Herald.*

The farming equipment at first was very meagre and consisted of little more than a plow, a harrow, and a two-shovel cultivator. With these it was difficult to prepare the heavy prairie sod so that it would produce a good crop. By the second or third year the sod had disappeared somewhat, if the seasons were not too wet. Corn, oats, and wheat were the staple items raised, though some rye was also raised. For hay, the native prairie grass was cut, and for a number of years plenty of this could be secured.

At first people had to live very simply. There were few means for securing money. There being but little timber near, lumber suitable for building had to be hauled a long way, so the buildings were made only as large as was absolutely necessary. There were no roads worthy of the name, and one simply started across the prairie in the general direction he wished to go, avoiding the marshes as much as possible. In the spring, sometimes for months, it was impossible to go across country except on horseback. Even now, the roads are often impassable for weeks in the spring. Ditching, grading and tiling, the frequent use of the King road drag, and, most recently, the practice of applying a coat of oil to the center of the road-bed, have made Illinois prairie dirt roads quite good most of the year. Practically no graveling has been done because there is very little gravel available within hauling distance. The only way to make a permanent road seems to be to ship in gravel or crushed rock and make a concrete road. This is being done very rapidly now with the main roads.

There were no markets except at Chicago, 125 miles to the Northeast and Peoria, 50 miles west. A trip to Chicago took several weeks, and to Peoria at least a number of days. Even at these places markets were uncertain, and sometimes the farmers were even compelled either to bring their load of produce back, or leave it. During those first years, just after the Civil War, grain was worth only a few cents per bushel, so that there was not much incentive to produce any large quantity.

The first railway in the state, the Illinois Central, was laid about ten miles west of the settlement. A little later, one was built several miles to the south, and soon after that, one to the north. These railroads did a great deal to hasten the development of Livingston County, and to make the Mennonite settlement in Waldo Township prosperous and progressive.

Three other congregations grew out of the original Waldo congregation. A group broke away because they considered the old church too formal and lacking in definite religious experience and formed the Egly or Defenseless Mennonite Church known as the Salem Congregation[2] located one and one half miles to the southeast of the Waldo Church. Another group grew apart from the original church because they felt it was too strict. It eventually developed into two congregations under Joseph Stuckey in the Central Conference of Mennonites. One was located three miles to the northwest, known as the Flanagan Church. The other, located toward the south, was known as the Meadows Church.[3]

Up to this time there had been preaching in the homes every four weeks by the following ministers: Christian Slagel, J. P. Smith, Rediger, and Oyer. The first meeting house was erected in 1867 at the same place where the present meeting house is located. The building was 32 by 48 feet in size, with one small addition to the rear, having permanent wooden seats, and stoves for heating. A new building was built in 1903, 40 by 60 feet in size, with a furnace, acetylene lights, oak seats, and a balcony for special occasions. This building was remodeled in 1918, by putting under it a basement to be used for Sunday School purposes and sewing society work. A portico was added to protect the front entrance and also to improve the basement entrance. Sheds were erected for the use of teams, but these are now used for automobiles. The church has no burying ground of its own but uses one in the township, three-fourths of a mile away.

---

[2] See Chap. XXXVII, the Salem Congregation near Gridley.

[3] See Chap L, The Illinois Congregations of the Central Conference.

A board of trustees has for many years had control of the church property. A few of those who have rendered valued services on this committee are: Daniel Augspurger, John Beller, Jacob Dellenbach, Joseph Zehr. There is no other committee besides the trustees, but they cover a field somewhat broader than merely finances. The church has no constitution or by-laws. Money for running expenses, such as fuel, light, repairs, janitor services, is secured by assessing the members a certain sum annually. No special provision has ever been made for the minister's living, but financial help has been given when it seemed necessary. On various occasions work has been done for ministers who were handicapped by illness. The congregation has always responded quite well to practically all outside calls for help. There is no special budget. Regular offerings are taken on the first Sunday in every month, and on special occasions.

The order of service at first was singing, devotional service, then a sermon followed by a prolonged testimony by all the ministers present, after which there was a prayer and a dismissal. In more recent years there have not been so many ministers, and the custom of prolonged testimony has been discontinued. At first the services were held every four weeks, but after some time this was changed to every two weeks. When Sunday School first began it was held on the alternate Sunday, but this was also changed many years ago so that there was both Sunday School and the regular church service each Sunday. The Waldo Congregation was among the first to make this decided change.

Until about the year 1914 the method of gaining church members was largely that of simply suggesting to the young people that they were old enough to unite with the church. An opportunity was given, usually in the early spring, for those that wished to do so, to join a class for preparation for church membership. If any did not voluntarily join this class by the time they had reached the age of about twenty, their parents usually urged them to do so. The converts are coming now at the ages of about nine to thirteen, as compared with the ages of about eighteen to twenty-five formerly. A person is considered a member after he has been baptized or received by letter. Membership can be discontinued by requesting a church letter. Very few members have been put out of the church. L. J. Lehman, J. S. Shoemaker, D. D. Miller, Sanford Yoder, A. C. Good, and C. F. Derstine have served as evangelists at different times.

The first Sunday School was started in 1868. It was held in the church meeting-house and in 1875 was accepted as a part of the regular church service. The promoters and first leaders were Christian Slagel, Joseph Gascho, and Samuel King. All of the classes were conducted in German until about 1900, from which time there was a gradual change over to the English. For many years the Sunday School met every two weeks. It was a German school rather than a Bible school—at least for the young people, until they learned to read the German language. In addition to the study of the German language there was learning and reciting of Scripture verses. The primary department was begun in 1910. There is no special session for the election of the Sunday School officers. The nominating committee presents a double list of names, and the voting is then done by ballot. The teachers are chosen by the superintendents, in consultation with the ministers, and often the classes assist in this matter.

Sunday evening services were first held about 1904. No great change has been made in these services except that the organization has been improved, and more variety has been introduced, such as special singing, and short talks by the ministers or visitors after the regular meeting. The organization consists of a chairman, a chorister, and a program committee of three. The chairman of the organization makes it his business to see that every one who has a part is functioning properly, and in emergencies takes charge of the meeting himself. The program committee usually plans the programs for a period of time. The programs consist of several essays, talks, and often some reading of Scripture references. The average attendance is about seventy-five. The work seems to be quite successful, and it does help to interest and hold the young people. It is also a means of stimulus and an opportunity of expression for the older people, who have from the beginning attended well and taken an active part.

A Sisters' Sewing Circle, which was established in 1905, holds a monthly meeting. For some years this was held in the homes, but when the church was remodeled, the meeting was held in the basement. During the past year it has been held in an unoccupied house. Most of the time is spent in sewing for missions and relief work, especially for the Chicago Home Mission and the India Mission, considerable work being done for Russian relief. There is a special organization for girls which was begun through the efforts of Mrs. Cora (A. L.) Buzzard and

Martha Nafzinger. Both circles have devotional meetings after the work is done. The Women's Circle is connected with both the state and national organizations.

In the early days of the settlement people did not get together nearly as much as to-day, and there was less freedom in some respects. The parents were supposed to make the marriage arrangements, or some friend of the young people who were interested in each other. But usually the young people had come to an agreement beforehand, and the asking by the parents or friend was a mere formality. The first definite organization for social life was in 1918 in the form of a literary society. The organization of the society consists of a president, secretary, and a program committee. Monthly programs are given in the homes. These consist of discussions, debates, readings, music, etc. Light refreshments are usually served. The attendance has been good, and the society work has stimulated reading and study.

At first there was considerable opposition to musical instruments in the homes but it no longer exists. There never were many organs, but there have been pianos for the past ten years or longer. For several years there have been choristers with some training in addition to what they received in the local singing classes, and this has helped the singing somewhat.

The church has been making use of its denominational literature practically since it has been published, most of the members subscribing to the church paper. Some religious literature outside of that published by the denomination is read: *The Sunday School Times, The King's Business,* and similar papers. The church treasurer makes an effort to care for renewals for church papers and orders for books. There has been a church correspondent connected with the church for fifteen years. There has been a Sunday School library since 1915, but it is not very heavily patronized. It contains about one hundred books.

In the early days of the settlement the school-houses were about four miles apart, as compared with two, now. The course of instruction was quite good, but not graded as at present. The school year was only about seven months, and after pupils were considered old enough to do some useful work they were kept at home. They often attended during the winter months until they were eighteen or twenty years old. The course of instruction was about the equivalent of six or seven grades of the present graded system. There was no special opposition toward education, but neither was there any very strong encouragement on the part of many. When high schools were first begun in the villages the Mennonites considered them quite unnecessary for their young people. This attitude still prevails quite strongly, though there is no serious opposition. Only a few of the young people have attended high school, so the high school has affected the church little, and has created no special problems. With so few attending high school, there have naturally not been many going to college. Those who did go attended Goshen College. Some financial support has been given Goshen College, although no definite figures are available, probably between ten and fifteen thousand dollars has been given at different times.

The church has been continually supporting mission work, its contributions running well over $1,000.00 annually, of which the maximum was $13,974.52 in 1918. This sum is so high because a good deal was given for the War Sufferers' Relief Fund and for the Home Mission Building in Chicago. Most of the money that has been given has gone to the missions in Chicago, India, and South America, and to charitable work.

The Waldo Church joined what was the merged Illinois Conference, at the time of the amalgamation of the Mennonite and Amish-Mennonite conferences. Before this it had been a part of the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference. The church and Sunday School conferences were held at the Waldo Church in the years 1906, 1918, and 1925. The attendance on each occasion ran about as high as 1500. The visitors were cared for in the homes of the members. The first time there were more who had to be cared for during the night, but by 1918 there were quite a few automobiles, and the people who came from the congregations not over 30 or 40 miles away usually went home for the night. On the first two occasions the people were fed in a special tent, the last time being served in cafeteria style in the basement of the church.

The church was in favor of maintaining the historic Mennonite principle of non-resistance during the World War which meant no war service. Not all who went to camp took the same position. Some did non-combatant work, but most of them did not. None were sent to the federal prison though some were treated rather brutally, —Roy Slagel in particular. The community was hostile toward the church at the time, but not nearly so much as it was toward the other two Mennonite churches in the community. The stronger opposition to them came because of their use of the German language and because of some unfortunate and unwise statements that were misinterpreted. No violence was done. The church took an active part in raising money for relief work in the war-stricken countries. No definite figures can be secured, but it amounted to thousands of dollars. Arthur Slagel, a member of the congregation spent a year or more in Russia in famine relief work in 1922.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE EAST BEND CONGREGATION NEAR FISHER[1]

The congregation which developed around the East Bend of the Sangamon River near Fisher was an outgrowth from Dillon Creek and other Amish communities. The first Amish settler in the Champaign County settlement was Charles Stormer who came in 1882. Land was cheap, for Stormer paid only twenty-seven and one-half dollars per acre. He was followed the next year by August Ingold, by Jacob Heiser in 1887 and by Andrew Heiser in 1888, and in 1889 by Peter Zehr from Deer Creek. Zehr, being a minister, soon organized a church (1890) in the Dixon school house in East Bend Township where the group had been holding services.

Due to increase in numbers a committee was appointed consisting of Jacob Heiser, Charles Stormer, and Andrew Birkey who (May 14, 1892) rented the Methodist church house at Houstonville. After this building became unfit for use the church members voted to purchase one and one-half acres for a consideration of fifty dollars on which they erected a frame building 36 by 40 containing one large room and two smaller rooms. This church held about one hundred and eighty people. The dedication services were conducted by John Smith in 1895.

On July 14, 1907, the church edifice was wrecked by a tornado. It was immediately torn down and replaced by a frame building 40 by 60 with a seating capacity for three hundred people. September 1, 1919, the building was enlarged and raised four feet in order to provide for a basement to accommodate a furnace and a large Sunday School room.

---

[1] Information from interviews and correspondence with J. A. Heiser, Samuel Zehr, Andrew Birky, Harold Zehr, and others of the East Bend Congregation, Fisher, Illinois. Also C. Henry Smith, *Mennonites of America, Herald of Truth* and *Gospel Herald* files.

A one acre burying ground was donated to the church March 18, 1896, by Andrew Birky, Senior, and family. This is registered with the state. The church committee hires a man to keep up the graves.

The first minister was Peter Zehr who was born in Woodford County, Illinois, and moved to Tazewell County at the age of five years. He was ordained to the ministry in the Goodfield Congregation in 1883 at the age of thirty-two years. He removed from the Goodfield Congregation to the congregation at East Bend, Fisher, Illinois, in the spring of 1889, and 1893, was ordained to the office of bishop and served this congregation until his health failed him a few weeks before his death.

The following is a list of ministers who have served this congregation: Daniel Griser, born in Baden, Germany, in 1838, was ordained to the ministry in that country and emigrated to Livingston County, Illinois, in 1878. In 1879, he removed with his family to Hopedale, where he resided for eleven years after which he again removed to Fisher where he took an active part in church work. His ministry was altogether in the German language. He died in February, 1923. Joseph Baecher, ordained to the ministry in 1893, is still serving the congregation though unable to take an active part in the ministry because of his health. Bishop George Gingerich, a native of Bavaria, Germany, came to this country in 1893, and helped in the ministry of the church until his death in March, 1907. Samuel S. Zehr was ordained to the office of deacon in June, 1906. He was the first deacon of the congregation and is still serving. Joseph A. Heiser was ordained to the ministry in August, 1917, at the age of twenty-nine years, and in May, 1921, to the office of bishop. The present ministry of the church is J. A. Heiser, bishop and Samuel S. Zehr, deacon.

The church property is vested in three trustees who are elected by ballot of the church for a term of three years, one being elected each year. This church has no constitution or by-laws except those agreed upon by the conference. Money is provided for running expenses of the church by an assessment on each member. Each is assessed equally and the money paid in advance. The church makes no provision for the minister's living though sometimes some of the members get together and do some of his farm work. The church takes turns at the end of each month with other churches in supporting some mission, orphans' home, the Old People's Home, District Mission Board, or General Mission Board work. The church has not supported any individual missions or missionaries but some money has been sent to South America for distributing tracts and other literature.

The church services and the method of gaining church members have been similar to other churches treated. A person is considered a church member when he has confessed his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and been received into the church by baptism. The membership of the church at the present time is two hundred and sixty-two.

The first Sunday School meeting was held in the spring of 1889 in the Dixon School house. During 1892 the Sunday School was organized permanently with D. D. Zehr as superintendent. Sunday School was held every two weeks in the forenoon, all class work being in the German language with no lesson helps or papers of any kind. It was conducted in this way until in the fall of 1895 when the church membership had increased and a new church house was built by the congregation at its present place. Here the Sunday School sessions were still held every two weeks until new methods and supplies were added. Then Sunday School was held and continued to be held every Sunday. The officers of the Sunday School are elected by the members of the church at the end of each year, the bishop presiding at the elections.

Evening services, usually called Young People's Meetings, were begun in 1906, but were not well attended in general until about July, 1916, when the young people of the congregation met at the home of Bishop Zehr for the purpose of asking the church to arrange for a better organization. At this meeting they gave some recommendations, the chief being that a superintendent and an assistant be appointed by the church. This plan was adopted by the church and the organization was soon effected. J. A. Heiser was appointed first superintendent and has held that office up to the present time. Levi E. Birkey now of Pompeii, Michigan, was chosen the first assistant superintendent.

The East Bend Sewing Circle was organized in October, 1917, by the Women's District Missionary Society in the person of Lydia Smith of Flanagan, Illinois, for the purpose of exercising charity toward those in need. Meetings were held monthly for several years in homes, and later in the church basement. All sisters attending or interested are considered members. The organization works through the State Branch.

The only meetings that have been held regularly during the week are those that have led up to the present Bible Study class with a Young People's Missionary Committee appointed by the church in charge of arrangements and J. A. Heiser as teacher. A great deal of interest is taken by the young people in the class. Instead of the young people taking upon themselves the whole responsibility of their social gatherings as they formerly did, they now have an organization that is under the supervision and authority of the church, by means of which their social needs are met. A literary society was formed but the ministry did not allow it to join the state organization.

The first singing in the church was in the German language, sung slowly in unison without notes or chorister. About 1896 notes began to be used and the singing began to be in parts, but the German language was still used. About 1908 it became necessary to use the English language in singing as the children no longer studied German and it became difficult for them to take part in the worship. The church was formerly very much opposed to musical instruments. A few members thus far have felt that they could conscientiously sanction musical instruments in their homes and the opposition is not as strong as formerly. Of course no instruments are used in the church service, for the church and the conference as a whole feel that they can maintain better and more worshipful congregational singing without their use.

The early attitude toward high schools was one of opposition, because it was felt that they made the young people conceited. This attitude is gradually changing. Even yet there is a comparatively small minority who are really in sympathy with the idea of the high school. The church helps Goshen College by direct contributions. The school has the general favor of the church.

The church became interested in missions about 1905 through members who visited various home mission stations. Andrew Birky did much to promote local interest in missions. There have been no missionaries, ministers, deacons, or educators that entered religious work direct from this church. However there are a number on the mission field who were formerly from this church, and others are preparing for definite work.

Since this church was not yet organized when the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference came into being, it was not a charter member but it joined as soon as it became an organized congregation. The Church and Sunday School conferences have been held with the church on two occasions. The Western District Amish-Mennonite Church and Sunday School Conference held September 22-24, 1909, had an attendance of five hundred and the Illinois Mennonite Conference, September 11-13, 1923, about eleven hundred. There have been about eight Bible conferences or Normals. The last one was conducted December 7, 8, 1915, by I. W. Royer and A. M. Eash.

Part III

AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN WORK

CHAPTER XXIX

THE "HERALD OF TRUTH" PUBLISHED IN CHICAGO[1]

A historical cross-section of national Mennonite activities in 1860 shows that the church was asleep, perhaps paralyzed. There were no organizations except the district conferences in the east. Even then these carried on no activities whatsoever since their function was primarily disciplinary. The younger generation can hardly imagine the Mennonite Church with no church paper or literature, no Sunday Schools, no Young People's Meetings, no evangelistic efforts, no missions, no boards, no conferences, no schools, and almost no leaders.

But still worse, with all this lack the young folks were being lost to other denominations or dissipated into worldliness. The Sabbath day was generally spent by old and young in a manner far from commendable for people in the piety and purity of doctrine of Mennonite heritage. The Mennonite Church was by no means holding its own. If nothing would have been done to change the situation the church would have been doomed to an untimely end.

---

[1] Material chiefly from John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana and files of the *Herald of Truth.*

This chapter contains material of a general interest not limited to the Illinois people but nevertheless distinctly related to them and therefore pertinent.

But there were signs of awakening. At a service held in 1862, at the Yellow Creek Church, Indiana, over six hundred people partook of the communion and forty-eight new members were added to the church. About this time John M. Brenneman and his brothers, Amos Herr, Henry Stemen, and others grew bold enough to initiate new things. Brenneman advocated Sunday Schools, preached in English, and traveled among neglected and scattered congregations. The first movement valuable in itself and important in its influence in bringing forth other movements that followed was that in the field of church literature.

Henry Bertolet of the Skippack Congregation, Pennsylvania, attempted to publish a church paper called *Der Evangelische Botschafter* in 1836. The first issue appeared in July but there was so much opposition that the July issue was also the last. This proved to be a forerunner twenty-eight years in advance of its time. The reward for the man who would take the needed step of leadership would be financial sacrifice and persecution. The one to accept the challenge was a promising Chicago business man lately baptized into the church. He gave up what proved to be a fortune to his partners in the lumber business. The first small beginning was made in the summer of 1863, when John F. Funk wrote an article, "Warfare and Its Evils," a timely subject for nonresistant people then in the midst of civil war. He had it printed in pamphlet form at his own expense and sent it forth. It took surprisingly well with the people. Bishop John M. Brenneman also wrote a pamphlet entitled "Christianity and War," which was printed by Funk about the same time and was also well-received.

In 1863, Rev. Peter Nissley and Bishop John Brenneman of Ohio, came to Chicago on their way to Sterling, Illinois, but being detained in Chicago on account of a severe storm they were unable to get a train so stopped over with Funk. During the stay, the subject of a church paper was discussed. The brethren were very enthusiastic for a publication. Having the promise of Brenneman as a contributor Funk resolved to make the venture. Upon investigation, he discovered that the printing of two monthly papers of four pages each for one year would cost $500.00. The amount for the first issues he forwarded from his personal income. Before long money from subscriptions helped somewhat. The first copies of the German and English editions of the *Herald of Truth* (*Herold der Wahrheit*) made their appearance January, 1864, consisting of four pages each. They had been edited and published by John F. Funk single-handed. The paper was launched without public funds, without a single subscriber, and without any office assistants. With the fourth issue, the April number, the size of the paper was doubled. The editorial work had been done during the winter evenings after Funk's regular working hours. Sometimes he spent whole nights in translating, proof-reading, and writing. Nor was the burden to be much relieved throughout the coming months. The *Herald* was the first English paper to be published for the Mennonites of all branches.[2]

Since the *Herald* had been edited and printed in Chicago, a discussion of it properly belongs in this treatise. However the people of Illinois themselves played no part in initiating it although they did receive it well after its appearance. In fact it was anxiously received everywhere. A copy of the first number chanced to stray across the battle-line into Virginia and was eagerly read and reread until it was literally worn out. The following is an interesting extract taken from the first issue:

---

[2] John H. Oberholtzer had published a German paper at Milford Square, Pa., as early as 1852.

"With trembling hand have I written and with many anxious thoughts the *Herald of Truth* with the opening year goes forth to its readers.

"It is a trial—an effort to do good—a means provided, through which moral and religious reading may, in an interesting, cheap and pleasant way, be laid before the Christian public advocating the pure principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which all may read with profit and pleasure without fearing the contaminating influences, now so wide-spread through the newspapers of the present day.

"Its principles and doctrines as already stated will be those of the Bible—its aims and objects—to bring its readers nearer to God, to point out to them the way of eternal life, to inculcate good, holy, peaceable, and conscientious principles in the minds of both old and young, to elevate, to raise up from sin and degradation all who are unfortunately laboring under its demoralizing influences, to do good to all men, to teach all nations, to encourage the despairing, to warn the heedless, to build up the weak, to correct errors wherever found. All these things will claim our attention, and with all these high aims, with God's blessing, I hope this paper will be sustained."

This was quite a large program for a paper in its infancy to undertake. People of to-day can judge for themselves how nearly it fulfilled its early aims. The paper included articles contributed by some of the brethren, news of the church, marriages, deaths, and other items which were of interest. Occasionally even dreams were recorded. In November of the opening year, Michael Keagey, a young brother from Virginia, was secured to assist in the routine work. By the close of the year, the subscription list had grown to over twelve hundred.

In 1866, the work had increased to such proportions that Funk sold his lumber interests so as to be able to devote full time to the editorial duties. From that time on his life was given to the purpose of furnishing literature for the church. In 1867 he moved to Elkhart, Indiana, where he established his business. In 1875 it was chartered as a stock company, with the name "The Mennonite Publishing Co." John F. Funk was president the entire fifty years' existence of the company until the charter expired in 1925. In Elkhart he continued to publish the two "Heralds" and later in addition other papers until 1908, when they were sold to the Mennonite Publication Board.

Besides the papers he published many books. Through these efforts Elkhart became the center of Mennonite activity. Many new and valuable movements for the church, such as that of John S. Coffman's evangelism, originated in Elkhart, due in part to the promotion of the sacrificing editor. By agitation through the printed page he helped to develop sentiment for Sunday Schools and a general demand for improved methods. The paper read in common by the Amish and Mennonites helped to draw these two bodies into closer unity. One cannot give a proper estimate of the value of the life-time labors of this man. He was the pioneer in church literature and was the early leader of the first important movements among the (old) Mennonites. His achievements made the work of other men and other movements possible.

CHAPTER XXX

SAVING EVANGELISM[1]

About half a generation after the literature movement took its rise another movement of equal importance, the evangelistic, came into being. Its forerunner was Bishop John M. Brenneman of Ohio, who traveled and preached among various scattered churches during the sixties. In addition, Stemen, Amos Herr, George and Daniel Brenneman deserve considerable credit. Although a good work was done yet it remained under considerable suspicion. The first series of meetings was held in 1873, at the Masontown, Pennsylvania, Church, where Nicholas Johnson who was then over eighty years old, was bishop. Daniel Brenneman and John F. Funk conducted the services, which, due to their success, continued for four weeks. As a result thirty-five members were baptized into church fellowship. The affair was kept more or less a secret, for the few neighboring bishops who did hear about it were very much opposed.

This type of service had to await the master hand to prove its usefulness and bring it into favor with the church. This evangelistic movement like that of literature, fell upon the shoulders of one man who had to work it out unofficially and without sustaining boards and often in the face of adverse conference decisions.

John F. Funk builded better than he could have known at the time, when he invited John S. Coffman to become assistant editor of the *Herald of Truth* in 1879. This promising young preacher from Virginia accepted the position at a salary of $500.00 a year. His removal with his family to Elkhart, Indiana, in 1879, played an important role in the destiny of the church. It gave Coffman opportunity to develop and use his talents by which the church has been greatly blessed.

---

[1] Material chiefly from Steiner, *John S. Coffman, Mennonite Evangelist* and files of *Herald of Truth.*

This chapter contains material of a general interest not limited to Illinois people, but nevertheless vitally related to them.

The problem of bringing the young people into the church was of the greatest importance. At this time the distinctive Mennonite doctrines had become neglected. Young people of Mennonite parentage were becoming the pillars of flourishing churches in other denominations. Among a few others, John S. Coffman realized that something must be done. He saw that the Sunday Schools were not a complete solution. The situation became a very great burden to him. So he began the "protracted meetings" or "series of meetings" to revive, indoctrinate, and convert.

M. S. Steiner says: "For all this work Coffman, by nature and by a special infilling of the spirit of God, was most admirably qualified. Well built, nearly six feet tall, weighing one hundred and seventy pounds, graceful, neat, smooth shaven, with a clear winning gray eye, kind face, fluent speech, refined manner, and a great amount of personal magnetism, he was fitted physically on the one hand, while his devoted, pious character, good common sense, the experience of a conscious conversion, and of an outpouring of His Spirit upon him for service, fitted him on the other hand spiritually for the work whereunto he had been called."

He accepted the challenge. His first series of meetings which were also the first in the Mennonite Church (except those by Funk and Brenneman at Masontown), were held in the Elmdale Church near Bowne, Michigan in June, 1881. This was the beginning of more than fifteen years of evangelistic labors for him. In view of the fact that during his services he entered the Illinois district and vitally affected the work of that state, a discussion of his efforts deserves a place in this history.

What might be called the third series of meetings was held at Cullom, Illinois.[2] Before Coffman had located at Elkhart, he had seriously considered moving to the Cullom Congregation. Although his plans had miscarried he still seemed to have a love for the place. The meetings at Cullom were held in February, 1882. In M. S. Steiner's *John S. Coffman* the following remarks were made upon that series:

"On this occasion the roads were deep; rain and frost had done their 'perfect' work in softening the earth. Some of the services were held in the Methodist Episcopal Church, others in a schoolhouse a mile from town. People of all creeds flocked in from all directions. They had never heard of a Mennonite evangelist before—something new for the Mennonites as well as others. Those in reach walked, while those from a distance that could not come on horseback hitched four horses to a farm wagon and came. A congregation made up of men and women who braved such conditions was sure to receive some good. What came they forth to see! A popular man of the world? No! They came to hear the Gospel fresh from the lips of one whose heart was all aglow with the message of salvation—a plain, zealous, God-fearing man, who spoke distinctly and touchingly on those things that reconcile sinners with a just God. There was as a result of these meetings such a stirring up among the members, who before the additions numbered twenty-five, that on September 24th of the same year, the meeting-house of the Cullom congregation was dedicated.

---

[2] See Chap. XVII.

"There was in the congregation during the meetings a lad who took his seat near the door in the rear of the schoolhouse. He loved to hear Coffman preach, but avoided coming in touch with him, 'There was something about him,' he says, 'that drew me to the meetings and gave me a profound respect for him; at the same time I felt so condemned in myself when I came near him I avoided meeting him. I went to hear him night after night during those meetings, and always afterward when he came to Cullom, and was brought very much under conviction. But I fought them for several years, before I finally yielded, and to-day I see more than ever the good that man has done for my soul and for our community.' " He came often to this little church and sustained it through the years when it would have perished. For a period he supplied the place himself when it was without a resident minister. So this church owes its very existence to this one man.

In the winter of 1889, Coffman was invited to Sterling.[8] At this time the church was on the decrease. Many of the young folks were being proselyted into the Lutheran and other churches. Others were entirely indifferent. The members were for the most part aged. Dancing was a popular pastime for the community. Coffman did a wonderful work. Not only did he awaken the church but he vitally changed the entire community. Many people had considered the Mennonites a very ignorant and narrow group. They could hardly reconcile in their own minds, this man of superior intelligence and ability with Mennonites. Coffman established a sentiment for righteousness such as the community had not felt before. Dancing disappeared because the taste for that type of entertainment had passed away. One of the converts speaking of the powers of this godly man said that the gospel which he presented was irresistible. His words had weight because his character had weight. It seems that his pulpit power was immense. His sermons were both well constructed and well rendered. He had a way all his own of getting the attention and impressing the people.

---

[8] See Chap. XV.

Coffman continued to come to Sterling annually for a number of years and the good work increased. During all this time he won many into church fellowship. Fragmentary church records show that the congregation was composed of 74 members in 1887. The membership in 1894 was 172. These numbers tell the story. The church was more than doubled in these few short years. The Sterling Church might not have entirely disappeared but it is certainly true that it never would have attained its present proportions if Coffman's influence had not entered the community.

The Cullom and Sterling congregations were not the only ones in the state to receive impetus from his labors although they did receive the most direct good. Coffman's spirit was felt in the other congregations for he visited them all and they appreciated him very much. He also spent some time among the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois.

During the first decade of evangelism he was the entire movement alone, but later others took up the work until there were dozens of evangelists in the field and practically every church accepted a "series of meetings" as a part of its regular program.

Coffman was by no means a one-talented man. The Young People's Meetings were largely organized through his advocacy. Through him the Sunday School Conferences were possible. In 1890 he began pioneer work in editing the Sunday School Lesson Helps. His later years were spent pioneering in the field of education. While he was by no means alone in this movement he nevertheless was the moving genius. Elkhart Institute (Goshen College) owes much of its early existence to this man. It was upon him that the main burden for collecting funds was thrown. It was mainly his influence that brought in the first students, many of whom were his converts. A number of the students came from Illinois and were thus influenced by the educational movement. Some of these have since become active leaders in the church. The state also contributed towards the maintenance of the school. Coffman's influence was felt in every activity of the church and also helped to make later men and movements possible.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE BEGINNING OF (OLD) MENNONITE MISSIONS[1]

The mission movement[2] took definite form several years after the evangelistic work had been started. Missionary sentiment had been developing for a long time. A far distant fore-runner was the little church started in Chicago by John F. Funk and Peter Neff in 1866,[3] when at an expense of eight hundred dollars they built an addition to Neff's house to serve as a place of meeting for the Mennonites in the city. Regular church services were held. It may be a misnomer to call it a mission but it really functioned as such. It antedated the Home Mission of Chicago by more than a quarter of a century.

Then too the work of such men as John M. Brenneman who traveled among the scattered churches must not be overlooked. His service was really rural mission work. When the Mennonites were immigrating from Russia in 1873-1880, the (old) Mennonites came to their assistance. A conjoint board of various Mennonite groups in the west, the Mennonite Board of Guardians, was organized for this task. Eastern Pennsylvania and Canada had their special committees. These various organizations, which raised about $100,000.00 for temporary relief, proved very helpful to the immigrants. When the object for which they were formed no longer existed they ceased to function. They had served the purpose of developing sentiment to do benevolent work.

---

[1] Material from J. F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana; S. F. Coffman, Vineland, Ontario; Mrs. Clara E. Steiner, Columbus Grove, Ohio; and J. S. Shoemaker, Dakota, Illinois.

[2] The Mennonites of Holland had started missionary work in Java and Sumatra in 1847, and the General Conference of Mennonites of North America had opened work among the American Indians in 1881, but the (old) Mennonites did not begin foreign work until the India Mission was opened in 1898. However the (old) Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago was started earlier.

[3] See Chap. XVIII, Old Chicago Congregation.

In 1882 at the Indiana-Michigan conference held in the Olive Church, Elkhart, Indiana, John F. Funk asked the conference for the privilege of forming and maintaining what was called the Evangelizing Fund for the benefit of traveling ministers who would do rural mission work. The first year the fund grew to the modest proportions of $26.36. This however was the beginning of a great work which was to pass through the successive forms of Evangelizing Committee, Evangelizing Board, Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board, and lastly Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities.

This first fund was in the hands of the "Mennonite Evangelizing Committee." The next year after its organization, rules and by-laws were drawn up. In 1892, a more complete organization was effected under the name of "Mennonite Evangelizing Board of America." In 1896 it was chartered under the laws of Indiana. At this time the name was changed to "Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board" because it had undertaken mission activities. In 1899 it established the mission in India. When the work of the Old People's Home and Orphans' Home was started in Ohio, another organization was formed, namely, "Mennonite Board of Charitable Homes and Missions." In 1906 these two boards were merged into the present "Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities."[4]

Its original receipts of $26.36 in 1883 had grown to $41,525.81, in 1907, and to $219,380.68, in 1921, while the resources of $121,797.22, which the board had under control, in 1907, had increased to $701,766.46, by the year 1921.

---

[4] Concerning the Mennonite Benevolent Organization which was another board and not named above, see footnote to Chap. XXXII.

During these years Evangelist J. S. Coffman was using his influence to develop sentiment for missions. As early as 1880 he wrote in his diary, "To-day, I have been thinking much on the necessity of mission work in the church. What we need is home mission work. Conference should make arrangements to send ministers into certain places where there is a prospect of a church being built. A mission board should be created and evangelists should be sent out under the care of the board."

All of these above-mentioned undertakings were forerunners of the mission movement of the (old) Mennonites. The pioneer to enter the field was M. S. Steiner. He was not so much alone in the movement as were Funk and Coffman in their respective movements because the mission program in itself required a larger group of promoters. The editor of the church paper could plow the ground, the evangelist could prepare the soil, but it was left to Steiner to plant the seed. Coffman had won large numbers into the church; Steiner gave them something to do. It may have been but a short step in advance of Coffman's work but aside from the publishing and evangelistic fields it was the only opportunity given the young folks to engage in active church work.

But missions did not grow into popular favor immediately. As in practically all denominations and in other Mennonite groups, they entered by the back door as if they were an unworthy cause which of course many at the time felt them to be. The door was the unofficial General Sunday School Conference. It came about in this manner. At this time there was a group of active and progressive younger people which had arisen largely through evangelistic efforts. They and the more progressive older brethren together started a General Sunday School Conference. A group of men composed of Jonathan Smucker, D. J. Johns, D. D. Miller, John Zook, M. S. Steiner, and J. S. Coffman met in August, 1892, near Goshen, Indiana, and arranged a program.

The first General Sunday School Conference was held near Goshen, October 5-8, 1892. (A local Sunday School Conference had been held as early as 1890 in Ontario.) M. S. Steiner was chosen as the moderator. The most significant topic discussed was on missions. The problem was presented by a young man from Sterling, Illinois, Solomon D. Ebersole, who was then studying medicine in the city of Chicago, and to whom conditions in that city had presented themselves as a powerful missionary challenge which in turn he passed along to the conference. The spirit throughout the conference was splendid. Coffman in writing of the program said, "The exercises were very interesting and instructive, more so than any one could have hoped. The young men did so finely in their talks, and there seemed to be a very humble spirit in them all. An excellent feeling prevails."

A year later a similar conference was held at the Zion Church near Bluffton, Ohio. This was a notable session, and a conference of destiny. Although it was no more official than the one of the year before, yet its work was far-reaching. The meeting proved to be spiritually uplifting and sent a thrill of loyalty and fervor through the young people of the church. Again Dr. Ebersole urged the cause of missions. "It was the year of the World's Fair in Chicago and sin did greatly abound." The mission spirit ran high. M. S. Steiner made a strong appeal to the church to assume its missionary obligations and undertake definite work. Before the conference closed many had resolved to dedicate their lives to such a cause. Others pledged themselves to aid financially. They decided that a mission should be opened in Chicago with M. S. Steiner in charge. All went home bearing the missionary message to their Sunday Schools.

Mennonite missions had begun. They were still unpopular with the mass, still in the infant stage, still untried, and before the workers were dark days through which they had to struggle. M. S. Steiner was to be identified with the mission movement the remainder of his life, first as the original superintendent of the first (old) Mennonite mission, then as member of the various mission committees and boards. He played a prominent part in the organization of the boards and was president of the Mennonite Board of Charitable Homes and Missions until it was merged into the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities of which he was president until his death. He literally burned himself out for the cause of the church, dying in the midst of his labors.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE HOME MISSION IN CHICAGO[1]

The opening of the Home Mission in Chicago was the first effort made by the Mennonite Church to do city mission work. It was born, like every other great cause, out of a deep conviction burning in the hearts and lives of a few individuals, who were attending the General Sunday School conference which was held near Bluffton, Ohio, in the fall of 1893. A strong mission spirit prevailed throughout the conference and after some discussion M. S. Steiner was appointed to go to Chicago and investigate the possibilities of starting a mission there.[2]

After several weeks' search the place was finally selected. The site was one that had been fitted out for a saloon at 145 W. 18th St., Chicago. The community around there was a poor one abounding in wickedness, poverty, and suffering and was in great need of a mission.

---

[1] Material for this chapter from interviews and correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. A. Hershey Leaman, Mrs. Clara Eby Steiner, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Page, S. F. Coffman, Melinda Ebersole, Mary Denlinger, E. J. Berkey, A. I. Yoder, A. D. Wenger, Aaron Loucks, N. E. Byers, Lina Zook Ressler, Mary Yoder Burkhard, Paul E. Whitmer, Bertha Zook Detweiler, C. Henry Smith, A. M. Eash, A. C. Good, Emma Oyer, Arthur Slagel, Mamie Good Neff, Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Schertz, Anna Yordy, and S. M. Kanagy, all at one time or at present workers at the mission; A. R. Zook on the first local board; John F. Funk, first bishop of the mission; files of *Herald of Truth, Gospel Herald,* and *Young People's Paper;* Report of Men's Missionary Conference, December 12, 13, 1917; Report of Dedicatory Service and Missionary Conference, January 5-7, 1919.

[2] Among the most active supporters of the Mission during its early days were J. S. Coffman, D. J. Johns, J. P. Schmucker, Noah Metzler, and D. D. Miller, all of Indiana, C. B. Brenneman of Ohio, Aaron Loucks of Pennsylvania and others.

The building was rented on November 20th and refurnished for Sunday School and Church. The first services were held December 3, 1893, with a packed house.

The mission was opened without any special funds, backed by no board, save the good will of the General Sunday School conference. M. S. Steiner was instrumental in gathering a committee together to have charge of the mission. In 1894 it was incorporated under the State of Illinois as "Mennonite Benevolent Organization." This name was used instead of Mission Board because such a name was at that time offensive to some. This was the first organization to be chartered for mission work. There seems to be a question whether the incorporation papers actually came through. In the spring of 1896 the Home Mission was closed temporarily, although some private work was carried on continually. The organization was later absorbed by the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board which had been chartered in 1896. This board again opened the Mission in the fall of 1896.

The superintendent at first lived in another part of the city but soon after rented a room in the building and thus became the first stationed worker as well as the first superintendent. Funds for the support of the mission came in very generously at first and every one thought that the mission was to be a great success. The day after Steiner had been appointed superintendent, the Mennonite Book and Tract Society met and launched the *Young People's Paper,* which had been agitated at the Sunday School conferences and Steiner was made editor. His salary was used in starting the mission work. The first winter at the mission was a very busy one.

At first M. S. Steiner was the only stationed worker but he was assisted by students who worked in the city. Dr. S. D. Ebersole, who was secretary-treasurer of the mission, with doctors W. B. Page and Dewitt Good, opened a free medical dispensary in connection with the mission that fall. A license was obtained from the city of Chicago permitting treatment of patients at the Mission. This amounted to licensing a hospital, the first in the Mennonite Church. Melinda Ebersole, who was the first permanent worker, arrived in March, 1894, and began her twenty years of mission service. In April, 1894, M. S. Steiner was married to Clara Eby of Columbus Grove, Ohio. At the same time the rooms above the mission hall were rented and a workers' home was started. Alice Thut (Page), S. F. Coffman, and S. D. Ebersole were the first residents. The students that lived there gave part-time and Sundays to the work. This made a fine working force. Many activities—Sunday School, church service, children's meetings, kindergarten, sewing school, medical and clothing dispensaries, and visitation work—were all successfully promoted.

This first missionary venture did not have the hearty support and approval of the church in general. Many thought that the young people were running away with the church. The sentiment became so strong that a delegation of prominent leaders[3] from the east came to Chicago that first summer and urged that the mission be closed. At this time Mrs. Steiner's health became such as to require a change and M. S. Steiner decided to take the declining church at Canton, Ohio, to which he had received a call.

After the withdrawal of M. S. Steiner, S. F. Coffman became superintendent. With the loss of Steiner, the mission was without an ordained man. This handicapped the work severely. The Mission Board then sent Bishop John F. Funk to see what could be done. After taking the voice of the brethren and sisters at the Mission, S. F. Coffman was ordained April 21, 1895. This made a new record for the Mennonite Church, it being the first ordination of a minister in the city of Chicago and the first in any mission station. The work continued to increase and the same year Bishop Funk baptized the first converts, four young men. More students had come to the city until more than a dozen were assisting in one way or another. This was very fortunate because there were scarcely any resident Mennonites in the city at this time to draw workers from.

---

[3] Preacher John K. Brubaker and others.

It seemed that now the mission was entering upon a period of prosperity but dark days were ahead. In the very beginning of the work donations came in more freely than a little later. The work was over-organized and expensive. Many people continued to think that an organized church in a city was a foolish impossibility. It was new to them. They had not been educated to the missionary spirit and were suspicious as to what the result of such an undertaking might be. The mission had not yet passed through its experimental stage. The actual opposition was not to the evangelistic effort but to the other phases of the work. The opposition from the churches as well as the difficulties encountered in the work with the people of Chicago, were a severe test for the workers and they were greatly disappointed when the committee in charge declared the mission closed in the spring of 1896, due to pressure from the east. The final service was held by M. S. Steiner on March 5. Some of the furniture was sent to Ohio. When the key of the door was being turned, a bright little boy ran up and cried in a pitiful voice, "Is it all done now?" The work was not closed for lack of funds which continued to come in, though in lesser amount.

The seed which had been sown was not so easily exterminated. Three of the workers resolved that the work so nobly begun should not so ingloriously come to an untimely end. E. J. Berkey, who had been secretary-treasurer, supported himself, living on seven cents a day with a diet of stale bread and hot water until the mission was reopened. Soon after this he left the city on account of his health. Although they had no regular income, Sisters Mary Denlinger and Melinda Ebersole[4] rented a four-roomed flat which had been a dwelling house, on South Jefferson Street about two blocks from the former mission and here carried on many of the former activities. Each Sabbath the children were gathered into Sunday School and during the week they were brought together to learn scripture verses and songs. N. E. Byers, then in attendance at Northwestern University, came down on Sundays and rendered useful assistance. He reorganized the School and thus became the first superintendent of a Mennonite Mission Sunday School. Sewing classes were continued for the girls and visitation work among the sick and needy maintained.

Through the privations of these few the gap was bridged over until the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board took charge of the situation and decided to reopen the mission which had been closed for a few months. The Board adopted the Mission at its annual meeting Oct. 7, 1896. At this meeting support of a minister and three sisters was pledged and Noah Metzler was appointed in charge. After the resumption of activities on Eighteenth Street, the interest grew rapidly. The hall was smaller than the first one had been and was soon overcrowded but the rent was not so high and that had to be taken into consideration.

---

[4] M. S. Steiner was instrumental in gathering together a committee to have charge of the mission. In 1894, it was organized as the Mennonite Benevolent Organization. This name was used instead of Mission Board because such a name was at that time offensive to the church. This organization was the one which closed the Home Mission the following year on account of lack of funds. In 1882, by agitation of John F. Funk, the Indiana-Michigan Conference had formed the Mennonite Evangelizing Committee which drew up a set of rules for organization the following year. In 1892, a more complete organization was effected under the name of Mennonite Evangelizing Board of America. It absorbed the Mennonite Benevolent Organization and in 1896, was chartered under the laws of Indiana as the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board. The same year it reopened the Mission and was in control until merged with the Mennonite Board of Charitable Homes and Missions in 1906. The new board, Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, in charge of all (old) Mennonite Mission and institutional work, has had control of the Home Mission since that time.

The ones who had remained faithful during the dark period were asked to become the workers. When some of the very people in the city who had been opposing them began to show a friendly spirit, and received them gladly into their homes they felt amply repaid for the hardships and privations which they endured during their first efforts. A few accepted Christ as their personal Savior. It was a great privilege to bring the Gospel into the homes. There were other ways in which the Mission was able to help the needy ones of the community. A medical dispensary was opened and the people were given free medical treatment. Many were helped in this way, but this particular phase of the work was discontinued some years later. Noah Metzler from the Yellow Creek Church, Indiana, was stationed in Chicago as the pastor and remained several months. A kindergarten table was made to serve the purpose of a pulpit. A. I. Yoder, who had been ordained to minister in Tennessee, was then sent for and acted in the capacity of superintendent for a little less than a year.

In January, 1897, A. H. Leaman,[5] a promising young man who had recently united with the church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, feeling a call to do mission work, went to Chicago. His ability was soon discovered and he was made the superintendent in September of the same year. Although young and inexperienced he grew as the work grew. He was destined to serve in this capacity for twenty-three years and minister much to the life and growth of the mission. He was the most important influence in popularizing the mission with the people of the church at large. Amanda Eby, who became the wife of A. H. Leaman, was a faithful worker in and about the "Home" throughout the years of her husband's superintendency.

---

[5] See biography of A. H. Leaman in biographical appendix.

The mission remained at 168 West 18th Street until 1900, when the owner forced them to leave. The Board purchased the former mission building at 145 (its number was later changed to 639) West 18th Street. "It seems providential that from the time the mission was closed in 1896, the owner of the building was not able to rent it even for a saloon and during that time it stood idle." On Monday evening, May First, John F. Funk preached the first sermon in the first owned (old) Mennonite mission building. The dedication services were held the following Sunday. With the attending advantages of a building of its own, the mission prospered.

In 1902 the superintendent was ordained to the ministry by Bishop John Nice. A congregation was organized several months later by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker and became a part of the Illinois Mennonite Conference which jointly with the General Mission Board controls it.

The work continued to grow until the building was no longer adequate to house the Sunday School. Some classes were held in dark rooms. The primary class met in the cellar behind the coal bin and another class had to meet outside. Finally an extra hall had to be rented to accommodate the large numbers. But even then the situation was not remedied because quarters were hard to keep in a sanitary condition with so many children. The workers agitated for a new building for a long time before the Board decided to build and then consented on the condition that the superintendent raise the necessary money in the state. It seemed like an impossibility but Leaman characteristically shouldered the responsibility and in a remarkably short time various congregations of Illinois and neighboring states, both Amish and Mennonite, raised a sufficient sum. Many who had never been liberal and some who had never given to any cause became generous, even promising to give more if needed. Some of the Iowa congregations asked for the privilege of contributing.

The old mission property was sold and the new modern plant, the best Mennonite church house in the State, was erected at 1907 South Union Avenue, a few blocks from the old site. This building contains an adequate auditorium, with adjoining Sunday School rooms, pastor's study, and Bible Class rooms. The basement is available for the lower departments of the Sunday School. Along side and adjoining is the workers' home with housing facilities for all who may be connected with the mission.

The dedicatory service including the missionary conference was held January 5-7, 1919, with a very large attendance. S. F. Coffman, former superintendent, preached the sermon. The session also observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the mission.

In September, 1920, H. R. Schertz became superintendent and filled the position to the satisfaction of the Board and the people. He returned to his former home at Metamora, Illinois, in June, 1923, at which time S. M. Kanagy, recently from the Hesston College faculty, succeeded him. Kanagy and his wife had both been active workers in the mission at Toronto earlier and came to Chicago with much experience. Under their charge the work has greatly prospered.

One of the inspiring features in connection with the mission work is the radical change brought into the lives of these ungodly people. One woman had been attracted to the mission by the sound of song. But fearing, she did not enter until after she had made several attempts. When the mission first took note of her she resented their visits, but continued interest won her. She permitted prayer meetings to be held in her home and finally joined the church contrary to her husband's wishes. The family threatened to break up but it did not. The sister remained faithful until death. Abram Eby had led a life of aimless gambling and wandering for twelve years until he came in contact with the "Home" after which he returned to his family, and has been of valuable assistance to the Lancaster, Pennsylvania Mission. Mr. and Mrs. Behr were directed into the higher life and used this inspiration to promote the Kansas City Mission. Anna Annaker (Eash) and Mary Cikanek were transformed from indifferent Catholics into active mission workers. The Drange family were marvelously converted. One of the daughters became the wife of J. N. Kaufman, missionary to India. Others were lifted from a life of drunken shame into faithful following after the new life. One German woman who did not even know the word "God" was converted. These are only a few of the various types of individuals saved but they will illustrate the service which the mission has rendered. No doubt the most widely known convert of the mission is Brother Dahlgren.

The Mission has been the means of directing into the service thirty-five ministers of whom eight were later ordained to the office of bishop. Those ordained at the Mission were S. F. Coffman, A. H. Leaman, I. W. Royer, G. J. Lapp, and Simon Kanagy.

From the beginning the Mission conducted regular church services, Sunday preaching both morning and evening. For several years during the first decade John F. Funk came from Elkhart, Indiana, to conduct German services every second Monday evening. Every Wednesday evening the regular prayer and Bible study meeting is still held in the mission building. On Thursday evening the Cottage Prayer Meeting is conducted in private homes.

It is quite interesting to note that most of the activities of the Mission were started in the beginning and have been continued with but brief interruptions ever since. The Sunday School held its first session on December 6, 1893, with six pupils. By the next Christmas the number had grown to over a hundred. Some of the families who later became active in the work of the Sunday School and Church in general were: Anderson, Bear, Dahlgren, Fricke, Gertman, Grange, Harvey, King, Kodah, Lehner, Marison, McQuirter, Neuffer, Seeman, Stemma, Stork, Sweet, and Voelcher. At one time there were thirteen nationalities represented. All ages from a few years to the aged were included. The problem of discipline was a difficult one and continued as such until the new building furnished class rooms. Before the new building was erected the Sunday School had grown to five hundred with an average attendance of 287. With such a crowd of children who had never been used to such services and whose home life had not been conducive to good behavior, it was a difficult task to keep good order. This was one of A. I. Yoder's duties when he was assisting at the Mission. None of the workers claimed any great degree of success during those early years. Alice Thut (Page) was the first superintendent of the Primary Department which met by itself. From time to time the various departments were added—Beginners, Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Bible Class, Home, Cradle Roll—making a thoroughly organized Sunday School.

The Home Department was organized in 1910. It did successful work for a number of years, using the Sunday School lessons in the homes. Later this system was somewhat altered. The Sunday School lessons are no longer used. The group is divided into three divisions and each meets at the mission with the teacher.

The Cradle Roll was started in 1910 by Emma Oyer, who is still in charge. It began with an enrollment of three and now boasts sixty.

The Medical Dispensary was an important activity during the first eight years of the Mission. Doctors Ebersole, Page, and Good started it while they were students in the city. Later it was in charge of Dr. Whitmore and finally Dr. G. H. Van Dyke did the work. It was discontinued when his services were no longer available. A clinic was conducted three times a week. At one time they had a room fitted up as a ward where patients could be cared for. Calls were answered free of charge. This was a wonderful help to the mission cause. Since Anna Yordy has become a worker at the Mission she has taken chiropractic training and now treats about a hundred patients a year as a part of the mission work.

The Mission also has a clothing dispensary. Through this channel the workers are able to get in touch with many families who are really in need. During the past few years garments have been given away at the rate of five thousand each year. Second-hand clothing is sent in by the country churches and is distributed among the most needy. The sewing circles of these churches also make garments from measurements sent to them by those at the mission. It is sometimes difficult to know just who should receive these garments, as some are inclined to take advantage. In one case a family moved its furniture into the neighbor's house and then presented a destitute plea to the mission for help. Another time a man posing as a mission worker wanted some clothing to distribute to the poor. E. J. Berkey was suspicious of him but gave him the clothes and then followed him at a distance to see what he would do with them. The supposed mission worker turned into a second-hand store. When Berkey got there he was gone. In spite of such cases, many worthy people are helped. A husband having abused his wife, deserted her and four little ones so that it was necessary to gather coal along the railroad tracks. One can readily imagine the service that can be rendered to such a family. Local sewing circles have been organized and some work is done for the foreign field.

The visitation work is one of the most important functions of the mission. It helps keep up the interest, holds old members, is a means of bringing in new members and is the only means of reaching those not able to come to the mission services. The community is divided into districts with a worker assigned to each district. The workers are shifted so that the district has a different visitor each time. This work is done chiefly by the women although the men do some visitation work in the sick rooms and in the hospitals. Many services can be rendered through this work. In case of sickness a doctor can be called; in poverty, a charity organization is notified or the mission supplies the need; and in matters of the soul, the Scripture is read and prayer is offered.

The most important organization for the women is the Mothers' Meeting which was started in 1900, consisting of a program held on the last Monday evening of each month. An effort is made to secure an outside speaker. Home problems as well as religious topics are discussed. The average attendance is about forty-five. This organization contributes to foreign missions.

A kindergarten was maintained during the early years of the mission. Miss Robbins was the first to have charge. No day nursery was necessary as there was one in the neighborhood. The children's meetings have always been an important part of the work. The children come to these meetings on Sundays and through the week for memorizing scripture verses and songs.

The fresh air work had a small beginning the first summer of the mission work. Two little girls were taken along to a conference and the people were so much impressed that they asked them to come again. The workers would take some of them along home on their vacations and in this manner the country people became interested. While the work was not organized as it is now, no doubt the idea of sending children out for a few weeks' vacation originated at that time. This work was finally carried on through the United Charities. This enabled the Mission to get free transportation by sending the children in groups to various communities within two hundred miles of Chicago. It has grown to the extent that about two hundred children and mothers are sent out from the mission every year. Faithful attendance at the regular services is necessary to obtain this outing.

In the beginning a Junior service was conducted before the preaching hour on Sunday evening. This has continued to the present time. Special Christian Workers' Meetings consisting of testimonials and talks were held occasionally for the older ones also before the preaching service. In 1903, the Young People's Meeting was organized and is conducted similarly to all others throughout the church. The young people have an annual gathering or outing on Decoration Day.

Other activities such as street meetings, distribution of tracts, and instruction classes for converts have been conducted at certain times. The mission has been quite fortunate in its musical leadership. During the early life of the mission it was benefited by such choristers as Dr. Thut, C. Henry Smith, and Alice Thut (Page). In recent years Margaret Anderson and A. W. Slagel have done good work in special music and general singing. Cantatas have been effectively given. Easter and Christmas are always celebrated by appropriate programs.

The first annual Christmas dinner was served in 1896. It is a great factor in reaching new families. Much cheer is brought to the children; for some of them it is the only "square" meal they get during the entire year. The food is furnished by the rural congregations and the surplus is distributed among the poor. An annual Flower Day is observed in September. In 1907, four hundred thirty children were present at this service and each received a bouquet. The first annual picnic was held on Labor Day in 1900. Over five hundred people of the mission community went to a woods sixteen miles from the "Home" where they ate a picnic dinner and spent the afternoon in a social way.

The mission does its share in foreign work. Four departments of the Sunday School contribute. Three orphans in India are supported. A special Easter offering for the new building of the South America Mission amounted to over one hundred dollars.

Not all the activities are carried on in full all of the time as the number of workers is too limited and too changeable. They all live in the home which adjoins the mission building. The food served is not extravagant but wholesome. Usually some one is hired to do the cooking. When no cook is available the workers take their turns. With all the handicaps and experiences the workers testify that they are a happy family. Visitors are always welcome. Over a thousand meals are served to visitors each year. The membership of the mission, in 1905, was thirty-two and at present is seventy. Some of this number have been drawn in from the country. The Mennonite position on unions, life-insurance, lodges, and fashions is so different from that of the city folks that it is difficult to transfer the large Sunday School membership into church fellowship.

An attempt will be made to list those who served at the Home Mission. It is not just to say that all were workers, for less than half were regularly appointed as such. Some were medical students who gave valuable assistance in the medical dispensary and on Sundays. Others were students in attendance at the Moody Bible Institute, Northwestern University, Chicago University, and the Bethany Bible School and rendered service as their time would permit. Others had come to the city to work, perhaps rooming at the mission, and gave some valuable service. Still others worked as janitor or cook which were humble though necessary tasks. It will be seen that many on this list were connected with the mission only a short time. They were there during their school course, or had come to gain a little mission experience before taking up work elsewhere. The mission performed the function of a mission training school. This made it rather a place of transient workers. Addresses are given showing where each came from. A large number of communities are seen to be represented. The order given is chronological.[6]

Worker, Address	**Service Period**	**Date**
Dr. S. D. Ebersole (First Sec-Treas.), Sterling, Ill.	about 2 yrs.	1893-5
Elizabeth Hershberger Ebersole, Grantsville, Md.	about 1 yr.	1893-4
M. S. Steiner (first supt.) (deceased), Columbus Grove, Ohio	about 1 yr.	1893-4
Clara Eby Steiner, Columbus Grove, Ohio (decd.)	9 months	1894
Dr. W. B. Page, Elkhart, Ind.	about 2 yrs.	1893-5
Alice Thut (Page), Columbus Grove, Ohio	1 year	1894-5
S. F. Coffman, Elkhart, Ind. (2nd supt.)	1½ yrs.	1894-5
Ella Mann Coffman, Elkhart, Ind.		1897
Melinda Ebersole (1st permanent worker), Sterling, Ill.	20 years	1894-1914
Mary Denlinger, Lancaster, Pa.	4½ yrs.	1894-9
Dr. DeWitt Good, Harrisonburg, Va.	2½ yrs.	1894-6
E. J. Berkey, Middlebury, Ind. (Sec.-Treas.)	2 years	1894-6
Mary Rhodes (Berkey), Harrisonburg, Va. (decd.)	several mos.	1894-5
John Gresser	few mos.	1894
A. I. Yoder, West Liberty, Ohio (acting supt. for a few months)	8 months and 14 mos.	1894 1897-8
Noah Metzler, Wakarusa, Ind. (mission pastor) (deceased)	several mos.	1896-7
A. D. Wenger, Harrisonburg, Va.	several mos.	1894-6
Aaron Loucks, Scottdale, Pa.	9 months	1894-5
Mrs. Aaron Loucks, Scottdale, Pa.	7 months	1894-5
Noah E. Byers, Sterling, Ill.		1895-8

---

[6] This list with addresses and dates as arranged from data furnished by Melinda Ebersole and Amanda Leaman, for a long time workers at the mission.

Lina Zook (Ressler), Scottdale, Pa.		1897
A. Hershey Leaman, Lancaster, Pa.	23 years	1897-1920
Amanda Eby (Leaman), Columbus Grove, Ohio	22 years	1898-1920
Miss Robbins, Chicago, Ill.		1894
Dr. Whitmore (Baptist missionary to China)		1896-7
Barbara Shantz, Canada		1894
Daniel Brunk, Elida, Ohio (preacher)	few mos.	1897
Dr. G. H. Van Dyke, Chicago, Ill.	5 years	1897-1902
Amanda Musselman, New Holland, Pa.	6 months	1899
Barbara Blosser (Steiner), Elkhart, Ind.	summer	1899
Bertram Shupe, Oronogo, Mo.	summer	1899
Mary Yoder (Burkhard), West Liberty, Ohio	3 months	1900
J. B. Smith, Berlin, Ontario	summer	1900
M. C. Lapp, Ayr, Nebr. (deceased)	1½ years	1900-1
Sarah Hahn (Lapp), Elkhart, Ind. (formerly Va.)	6 months	1899-1900
J. F. Bressler, Pa.	2 months	1899
	6 months	1910
Mrs. J. F. Bressler, Ft. Wayne, Ind.	6 months	1910
Levi Hartzler, West Liberty, Ohio	winter	1900
Lena Stauffer, Canada	1 year	1900-1
Fannie Landes (Landis), Canton, Kans.	2 years	1900-2
Molly Shank (Kauffman), Missouri	6 months	1901
Samuel Christophel, Cullom, Ill.	winter	1902-3
Lydia B. Stutzman (Miller), West Liberty, Ohio	3 months	1903
Bessie Landis (Gerig) (deceased), Sterling, Ill.	1 year	1903-4
Peter W. Dierberger, Indiana	6 months	1903
Paul E. Whitmer, North Lima, Ohio	summer	1903
Hattie V. Fisher (deceased), New Paris, Ind.	1½ years	1903-4
George J. Lapp, Ayr, Nebr.	about 2 yrs.	1902-4
Esther Ebersole (Lapp) (deceased), Sterling, Ill.		
Bertha Zook (Detweiler), Topeka, Ind.	summer	1904
Amelia Hirstein (Grove), Cullom, Ill.	about 1 yr.	1903
George Schultz		
Lovina Engel Brenneman (decd), Washington, Ill.		
Dr. B. F. Thut, New Stark, Ohio		
Mrs. B. F. Thut		
C. Henry Smith, Metamora, Ill.		
P. R. Lantz, Fulton Co., Ohio		
A. M. Eash, Middlebury, Ind.	2 years	1903-5
Kate Blosser (Hilty), Rawson, Ohio	2 years	1901-2, 5-6
B. B. King, West Liberty, Ohio	3 months	189-
Melinda Mann (King), Elkhart, Ind.	3 months	189-
I. W. Royer, Ohio	about 2 yrs.	1905
M. C. Lehman, Ohio	summer	1904
Kate Kurtz, Smithville, Ohio	1 year	1904
A. C. Good, Sterling, Ill.	3 months	1905-6
Lulu Greenawalt (Reist), Goshen, Ind.	1 year	1905-6
H. F. Reist, Lancaster Co., Pa.	3 months	1907
Francis Zook (Oyer), Belleville, Pa.	8 months	1906-7
Ruth Buckwalter, Palmyra, Mo.	14 years	1906-20
Albert B. Rutt, Goshen, Ind.	8 months	1906-7
Amos Oyer, Meadows, Ill.	fall & winter	1906-7
John Thut, Bluffton, Ohio	about 2 yrs.	1907-9
Anna King (Hartzler), West Liberty, Ohio	9 months	1904-5
Phoebe Bachman, Cazenovia, Ill.	6 months	1909-10
Elmer D. Hess, Lancaster, Pa.	summer	1907
Mrs. Elmer D. Hess, Lancaster, Pa.	summer	1907
Emma Oyer, Metamora, Ill.	since	1907
Fannie Hershey (Lapp), Manheim, Pa.	3 months	1909
Joseph H. Bontrager, Chicago, Ill. (formerly Ohio)	1½ years	1910-12

Mrs. Gertrude Bontrager, Chicago, Ill. (for. Ind.)	1½ years	1910-12
Mary Cikanek, Chicago, Ill.	1½ years	1912-13
Arthur Slagel, Flanagan, Ill.	3 years	1913-16
Mamie Good (Neff), Sterling, Ill.	2 years	1913-15
Anna Yordy, Eureka, Ill.	since Dec.	1915
Lena Bellar, Flanagan, Ill.	summer	1920
Ida Yoder, Flanagan, Ill.	about 1 yr.	1922
Henry R. Schertz, Metamora, Ill. (supt.)	2½ years	1920-23
Mrs. Martha Imhoff Schertz, Metamora, Ill.	2½ years	1920-23
Roy Buchanan	since Sept.	1920
S. M. Kanagy, Hesston College (supt.)	since June	1923
Mrs. Kanagy	since June	1923

On early mission boards in charge of the Home Mission were:

G. L. Bender (deceased), Elkhart, Ind.
J. K. Hartzler (deceased), McVeytown, Pa.
C. K. Hostetler, Elkhart, Ind.
A. B. Kolb (deceased), Elkhart, Ind.
D. S. Yoder, West Liberty, Ohio
Herman Yoder (deceased), Goshen, Ind.
A. R. Zook (deceased), Topeka, Ind.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE TWENTY-SIXTH STREET MISSION IN CHICAGO[1]

The Twenty-Sixth Street Mission was an outgrowth of the Chicago Home Mission which promoted it. It was one of the dreams of A. H. Leaman then superintendent of the Home Mission to extend the work of that mission by establishing a branch elsewhere in the city. After considering this plan for some time Leaman and A. M. Eash, the latter also connected with the Home Mission and interested in the new project, set out to locate a needy and desirable field for the proposed Extension Sunday School or Branch Mission. It was a hot Saturday afternoon in July, 1906 when their tramp brought them to the community in the neighborhood of Halstead and Twenty-Sixth Streets. The boys and girls appeared to be bright and intelligent although deprived of church privileges. The people were largely of the working class. They were poor, but the destitute were not so numerous as in some sections. Over sixty saloons were in the life-wrecking business. The district, measured in agricultural terms, would form a nice-sized farm of about two hundred acres. Several investigations were necessary to find a building which could be rented for opening the work.

In September of the same year, 1906, the first Local Mission Board of Illinois, composed of J. D. Conrad, president, Benjamin Herner, secretary, A. H. Leaman, treasurer, A. C. Good, and Samuel Gerber were called into special session. This board rented a hall and a small flat of four living rooms on Twenty-Sixth Street and Emerald Avenue. A. M. Eash, his wife Anna Eash, and Kate Blosser (Hilty) took charge of the station. A. H. Leaman was made general superintendent of the Home Mission, the Russian Mennonite Mission, and this new mission. Later, however, each mission was given a local board and A. M. Eash was made superintendent of the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission Station. It was under general control of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities.

---

[1] From interviews and correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Eash, J. D. Conrad, A. H. Leaman, A. C. Good, and Samuel Gerber; Eash's booklet on the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission, *After Ten Years;* files of *Gospel Witness, Gospel Herald, Christian Monitor,* and *Mission Worker.*

The opening services were held the evening of September 23, 1906. The service had been announced for 7:30 in the evening but the children began to gather in the afternoon. These children were quite wild and mischievous. Songs, prayers, and talk failed to silence their uproar and they were dismissed a half hour later. The meeting attended by the adults was more encouraging. It might be interesting to state that the pulpit was made by three superintendents of other missions. The first few weeks there were Sunday services and two on Wednesdays. Later on a German service was held on Tuesday evening and Industrial work on Thursday and Friday.

The first revival meetings of two weeks were conducted in the early part of November with over twenty-five converts. A special Sunday morning Bible class was introduced for the benefit of these new seekers after truth. It was conducted by H. Frank Reist who was then attending the Moody Bible Institute. Sister Blosser, one of the workers, on account of ill health was forced to give up her duties at the mission and return to her home before the end of the first December. She had had charge of the Primary Department and also the Sewing School. At that time the Sewing School had grown to one hundred in attendance.

At first the pulpit was supplied from outside the mission. I. W. Royer, I. R. Detweiler, H. R. Myers, A. H. Leaman, and A. F. Wiens were among the number who preached there. During the first eighteen months of mission work all the various departments were growing.

On account of the increased rent it was necessary to secure a new location. This was done in March, 1908. The new building was located at 500 East Twenty-Sixth Street. It was an improvement over the former one as the quarters were much larger and better lighted. The last meeting in the old building and the first one in the new were upon the subject of temperance. With striking inconsistency the old building was put to use as a saloon.

The first converts were baptized on November 14, 1908. Eight souls were received into church fellowship. The Revival Meetings of March, 1909, brought nine confessions. A year later S. E. Allgyer held a series when fifty accepted the Savior.

During the year 1909 the superintendent was ordained to the ministry by J. S. Shoemaker, who had bishop charge of the mission and acted under direction of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities of which he was secretary at the time. New workers were added as others found it necessary to leave. Usually there were three, sometimes four on duty.

The work grew beyond what the workers had time to properly care for. The once spacious hall was now far too small. This crowded condition made it imperative that larger quarters be found. The local board, having met, decided to erect a new building. The Mennonite Church Conference for the district of Illinois, held in June, 1909 at Freeport, took steps by appointing solicitors to raise funds for the new building. All the churches, Amish as well as Mennonite, were canvassed. Nearly all the money came from Illinois. By November the lot for the building was purchased. The local board appointed a building committee, composed of H. V. Albrecht, Tiskilwa; C. S. Schertz, Eureka; and John H. Kreider, Sterling. The ground for the new building was broken in June, 1910, and the cornerstone laid in July. The new building located at 720 West Twenty-Sixth Street was dedicated December 11, 1910. I. R. Detweiler preached the sermon. At the evening service Samuel Gerber, A. C. Good, Sister Quinter, and I. W. Royer spoke. Many friends from the country were in attendance thus showing their interest in the cause.

This new building was a very efficient one for missionary purposes. The second floor furnished living quarters for the workers. The first floor contained a main auditorium with adjoining Sunday School Class rooms. The basement was available for other activities if necessary. The property was valued at $21,000.00. With a modern building the work went forward to larger activities. On Easter Day, 1915, a new pulpit was used for the first time. It had been made and placed there by Charles Johnson in memory of his daughter Emma who had been won to the Sunday School and had died the preceding October. Special services were held upon the tenth anniversary in which A. H. Leaman, J. S. Shoemaker, A. E. Kreider, and P. E. Whitmer were asked to take part.

To make this history complete it will be necessary to deal with each of the various activities that the institution at one time sustained. It is in these activities that the talent of A. M. Eash as an organizer is seen.

The Sunday School always was the largest activity which the mission undertook. The first session was held on September 30, 1906, with an attendance of forty-six pupils. Some of the names among those present were Appel, Baum, Chamber, Frank, Hoffman, Obelhauer, Schroeder, and Young. The problem of discipline was very great at first. In a year the attendance had grown to about a hundred. The school was at first divided into two departments. When the mission moved into its second building its attendance doubled. A separate beginners' department was added at that time. As growth continued the departmental Sunday School standard was applied and all the departments introduced, including Cradle Roll, Beginners, Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior, and Adult. In 1909 the simpler lessons from the graded series were used for the Beginners. The graded lessons in part were finally adopted for all except Seniors and Adults who used the Uniform Lessons. To overcome the problem of teachers a Teachers' Training Class was introduced in 1910, with I. W. Royer as the teacher. A survey of the community made in 1909, assisted by J. W. Shank, brought in some new members. The problem of regular attendance was much greater than it is in the country. A Bible was given to the one who would not miss a Sunday during the entire year. Prizes of this nature stimulated attendance. All absentees were visited which also promoted a better attendance. To further increase the interest, activities were added during the week. The boys met for mission study and play while the girls met in sewing classes.

Work among the boys was not limited to the hour on Sunday. Effort was made to minister to them educationally, socially, physically, and industrially as well as religiously. These same Sunday School boys met in a club during the week. Some of the groups were willing to help make improvements about the building. Some did pyrographic wood-burning. These outside activities for the boys were limited to Sunday School members so that none could engage in the social life without being brought into the religious atmosphere.

The work among the girls like that among the boys extended beyond the hour of the Sabbath. The Sewing School for the girls was started in the very beginning of the mission. The group was too large even in that early day so they met in several divisions on different days. Here the girls were taught to sew but they also received social benefits. The girls became acquainted with each other and the teacher, coming into more intimate contact than was possible in the Sunday School classes. When sewing was introduced into the public school curriculum the mission discontinued this work. Classes for social and industrial work were substituted. As many as nine such weekly classes were conducted at one period of the mission's history. Lessons in sewing, crocheting, housekeeping, and the like were given, and some pyrographic wood-burning was done. At times the boys and girls met in a social way to celebrate some one's birthday or the recovery of one who had been sick.

The Home Department was organized in 1908, to carry the Bible to those who could not or would not attend the Sunday School. At its largest it had almost one hundred members. It influenced some to attend the Sunday School and some became church members. After this work had been going on for several years a slight change was made. Several mothers gathered in one of the homes for study during the week. This came to be called the Home Bible Class. The Sunday School Lesson was usually the center of study. Then for those who decided to attend the Sunday service there was organized a Bible Class for women, which at one time attained a membership of forty-five.

The Cradle Roll was organized in 1909 with only a few babies. It increased to as many as a hundred. This activity was entirely visitation work. It was a good point of contact and had a tendency to bring the other members of the family to the Sunday School as well as enrolling the little tots. Both the Home Department and the Cradle Roll are features of the larger program of visitation work. The mission tried to visit each member of the Sunday School and church once per week and especially the absentees and the sick. Possible members were added to the list and called upon. The visits varied in length and kind. Some were social calls, others were for Bible reading and prayer. Various experiences were encountered in this work. Sometimes the door would be slammed in the worker's face. Sometimes the door would not even be opened. One time a dead baby was discovered upon which the mission took steps to give it a Christian burial. In another instance a highly tempered woman tried to commit suicide. However she was converted and remained faithful to the church until death. In other cases the worker was a very welcome visitor. At times street meetings were conducted. On one occasion a worker's life was threatened if he returned to that spot. But coming again the next day no violence was experienced.

The Mothers' Meeting which was held on Thursday afternoon was for the purpose of aiding the mothers in home building. Part of the time was spent in a religious hour, then other subjects such as housekeeping and medicine were introduced.

The Day Nursery was called into being to allow poor mothers to leave their children while they worked. Without this service, many a mother would have had to give up her children to an orphanage. The nursery was opened in 1913, with Kate Sommer (Troyer) in charge. There was an average attendance of forty until it was closed in 1919. This work was a means of attracting many into the Beginners' Department. It was difficult to keep enough workers for this added service. A very small charge was made to remove the stigma of charity in the mind of the poor mother.

The Weekly Bible Class was started in 1911, with I. R. Detweiler as the teacher. Among others who served in this capacity were I. W. Royer, J. W. Shank, A. W. Geigley, and A. M. Eash. At first the class was held on Monday evening but later it was combined with the Wednesday evening prayer meeting.

Each season furnished its special attractions. On Easter the Sunday School would give a suitable program. Rally Day in the fall was observed and the promotion of pupils was usually made at that time. At Christmas the smaller children would render songs, exercises, and recitations, while the young people gave a cantata. Almost always kind friends in the country made it possible to give small gifts to the children. But of all these things the city child enjoyed most the summer outing. This fresh air work was made possible by the rural people opening their homes and the railroads furnishing free transportation. The children remained in the country two weeks, sometimes longer, much to the benefit of their health.

The district in which the mission was located had a large number of poor people. Charity work became one of the necessary activities. Demands were made for food, clothing, fuel, and medical assistance. All that was necessary for the mission to do in certain cases was to notify the proper charity organization, orphanage, or dispensary. But considerable direct work was done. Each year about twelve hundred garments and about one hundred dollars were given away.

The mission tried to broaden its sphere and attempted work among the foreigners. As many as twenty nationalities were at one time represented in the Sunday School. In the beginning special services were held in the German and Bohemian languages but they were not continued any length of time. When the Italians began to move into the section effort was made to win them through their language. Some of the workers actually began to study Italian and continued it for several years, but the number of workers was too limited to make this feature of the work a success. A successful effort was made for the India Mission. In March, 1907 an evening was devoted to a program upon the India field. When Dr. and Mrs. C. D. Esch, India Missionaries, were in Chicago and especially the year that they were stationed at the mission as workers the people received considerable impetus towards the foreign field. When they were about to leave for India the mid-week Bible Class and other mission friends decided to hold monthly missionary collections for their support. The birthday offerings were also added to that sum. Medicine and instrument cases were purchased for Doctor Esch. Another missionary stimulus was given when Florence Cooprider came to the city to study for foreign medical missionary work. Her influence was more directly felt when she became a teacher in the Sunday School. She was also supplied with an instrument case. One year the local membership of fifty raised $800.00 for local relief and missions.

In the spring of 1919, A. M. Eash the superintendent was given a leave of absence for a year to take up relief work in the Near East. From July, 1919 to July, 1920, William Brenneman was acting superintendent. As Eash wished to continue in relief work another year he resigned and Mrs. Eash and son C. Harold moved out of the mission building. In the fall of 1920, Nelson J. Litwiller who was attending Bethany Bible School, was made superintendent. He and his wife remained at the mission until June, 1921. At that time John H. Warye became superintendent until he and Mrs. Warye left in September to prepare to take up the work in India. In the meantime A. M. Eash, having returned to America, moved into the mission building with his family, in December, 1921, at which time the local congregation appointed him as pastor. He again was made superintendent in August, 1922. Later, owing to difficulties with the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities in the administration of the mission, Eash resigned to take up work with the Central Conference of Mennonites.

For the years since 1919, the history of the mission is more in the nature of an apology than an achievement. The membership dropped from fifty to fifteen and the various activities in like proportion. The war seemed to disrupt the local church. Frequent change of superintendents and lack of permanent workers were of course unfortunate. To add to the difficulties, the Mennonites of Illinois seemed to lose confidence in the institution.

After the matter of Eash's resignation had lingered indefinitely for several months the Central Conference made arrangements with the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities to purchase the building and did so. The mission congregation reorganized with twenty-four members and Eash as pastor and entered the Central Conference. Thus the Twenty-Sixth Street Mennonite Mission came to an end as an institution of the (old) Mennonite Church, but its work was continued by the Central Conference.[2]

This is in brief the local history of the Twenty-Sixth Street Mennonite Gospel Mission. Only a few of the individuals have been mentioned who aided in the carrying on of the work that has been accomplished at this place. There were a great many who though not officially connected with the mission were of much assistance to the institution. A complete list of workers is given in order that they may be recalled as their services justify.

---

[2] This mission is also treated with the Central Conference of Mennonites, Book IV, Chap. LIII, which gives more information upon its later history.

Worker, Office	**Service Period**	**Date**
Amos M. Eash, Superintendent		1906-20, 22-
Anna (Mrs. A. M.) Eash		1906-20, 22-
Kate Blosser (Hilty)	3 months	1906
A. F. Wiens, Minister	6 months	1906-07
E. D. Hess, Minister	1 summer	1907
Mazie (Mrs. E. D.) Hess	1 summer	1907
Lucy Mishler (Grabill)	3 months	1907
Lydia Hoffman (Stahl) (deceased)	3 months	1908
Ollie Shank (Grabill)	1 year	1908
C. K. Brenneman, Minister (deceased)	1 year	1908-09
Fannie Stutzman (Hershberger)	1 summer	1908
Barbara Allgyer (Yoder)	2 years	1909-11
J. W. Shank, Missionary to South America	1 summer	1909
Dr. C. D. Esch, Missionary to India (deceased)	1 year	1909-10
Mina (Mrs. C. D.) Esch, Missionary to India	1 year	1909-10
Anna Grabill	4 years	1909-13
I. W. Royer, Minister	2 years	1909-10
E. S. Lape	1 year	1911-12
Nora (Mrs. E. S.) Lape (deceased)		
Lydia LeFever (Burkhard)	2 years	1911-13
A. W. Geigley	1 summer	1912
W. J. Brenneman	3 years	1912-15, 19, 20
Anna Reber (deceased)	4 years	1912-16
Katie Sommer (Troyer), Missionary to India	1 year	1913, 1916
Lizzie Sommer	3 months	1913
Ray Kring	1 year	1913-14
Matilda Speicher	7 years	1914-21
Lena I. Albrecht	several months	1914
Mary Moyer	1 summer	1914
Alma Albrecht (Smucker), Missionary to India	1 year	1914-15
Elizabeth Horst	1½ years	1914-15
Nancy Ramseyer	4 years	1915-20
Edna Miller	1½ years	1915-16
Lydia Zook	1 year	1916
Etta Brubacher	3 years	1915-18
Phoebe Yeackley	4 years	1915-19
George D. Troyer, Missionary to India	6 months	1916
Nelson J. Litwiller, Supt., now missionary to S. A.	8 months	1920-21
Ada (Mrs. Nelson) Litwiller, Missionary to S. A.	8 months	1920-21
Norman Bauman	1 year	1919-20
John H. Warye, Missionary to India	4 months	1921
Nellie (Mrs. John H.) Warye, Missionary to India	4 months	1921

Influence of the Chicago Mission Work upon its Illinois Mennonite Constituency[8]

Question is often raised as to the value of city missions. Bare statistics for all of the city mission work show that it requires on the average one worker, sixteen months and $1375.00 to win one convert to the church.[4] This does not show the missions to be very efficient in soul-winning. One must remember however, that a city-born person has a long road to travel until he can see and feel Mennonite convictions. Furthermore the number of converts cannot fully measure any mission's success. The mission has a general elevating influence in its community. It touches the young life, rendering it much better than it would have been otherwise.

---

[8] Some of the points of this discussion were gathered from an address by N. E. Byers at the Dedication Services for the new Home Mission Building. See booklet, *Report of the Dedicatory Service and Missionary Conference* January 5, 1919.

The Chicago Missions have served as training stations for church leaders. Out from these institutions have gone men and women who have become bishops, ministers, foreign missionaries, professors, editors, and other church workers. These are scattered as far and wide as the Mennonite Church itself. The Home Mission has turned back thirty-five men into the ministry of the church. Ten of the missionaries upon the foreign field were at one time regular workers at the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission. The training received was very practical. The worker deals with real problems. The teaching must be interesting or the class will not come. The preaching must be vital or there will be no audience. But aside from the mission's service to its local community and its contribution to the church at large each of the Chicago missions have made a reflex contribution to the church in Illinois.

In the first place, these missions were influential in keeping the church alive. Without any general interest outside the various congregations the Amish-Mennonites and (old) Mennonites of Illinois would likely have fallen apart or lapsed into inactivity. The Chicago Missions were the first to furnish that general outside interest so vital to their spirituality. The mission cause, in such forms as local boards, furnished activity for men who would have otherwise remained dormant. A church without missions is incomplete. The fact that Illinois has had two missions, places her in the foreground in comparison with other district conferences.

---

[4] This was computed from statistics appearing in the Mennonite Year Books for the past several years.

Second, the missions aided in bringing about the union of the Illinois Mennonite Conference and the Amish-Mennonites who lived in the state. The missions being a common interest of both branches, the board members and leaders became accustomed to working together, contributions were made to the common treasury, and consequently the people were drawn together.

Third, the missions served to educate the people into giving. The support of missions on the part of the majority of the Illinois membership is limited to giving of means. With the cause so near at hand—most of the rural members visited the stations at one time or another—the people more readily made donations toward its support. In one generation these people have been changed from non-givers to generous contributors. The two modern mission buildings in Chicago are a monument to the generosity of the Illinois people who have given more than $30,000 for this purpose alone. The giving of the money not only made possible larger mission work in Chicago but cultivated a habit of supporting all the Mennonite institutions.

Fourth, the missions were among the important agencies which influenced the formation of the various sewing circles throughout the state as well as the state organization of circles.[5] The local circles originated to furnish garments for the clothing dispensaries of the missions.

Fifth, the missions led the way in the matters of efficient equipment and effective methods. The buildings served as models for improving the rural church-houses. Graded lessons were tried long before the rural communities knew that such were in existence. Visitors at the mission imbibed the new and better things and took them along home. Much of this influence may have been unconscious but nevertheless vital. The country folk have often been inspired by the manner in which the mission youngsters quote scripture verses, and by the testimonies of some of the converts.

---

[5] See Chap. XXXIV.

Sixth, the missions have helped to sift essential principles from mere customs and traditions that have grown up. The rural minister has to farm as also does the country Sunday School superintendent. Since their minds must be largely upon secular things much of the traditional religion is taken for granted. Not so with the mission worker. His entire time is given to religious duties. Besides he must face people who have no Mennonite blood in their veins and prove to them that the Mennonite teachings are vital principles.

Last, the missions have given opportunity for giving life as well as money. Some of the sons and daughters of Illinois have been led into channels of church work by contact with the missions. Indeed some have been workers at one or the other of the stations and thus entered a life dedicated to definite church service. The Chicago work has had a substantial bearing upon the Illinois people's support by money and personnel of the foreign missionary work of the church.

Coöperative Work[6]

A. H. Leaman as superintendent of the Home Mission was one of the promoters of the Happy Hour Mission which was in operation from 1908 to 1914. The various Mennonite Missions in Chicago also united together for a Quarterly Sunday School meeting.

---

[6] For Coöperative Mission Activities by the Mennonites in Chicago, see Chap. XLV.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE ILLINOIS DISTRICT MISSION BOARD AND NEW MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The Illinois District Mission Board[1]

The general mission board of the (old) Mennonites, that is the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, was desirous that the various district conferences should organize their own district boards which would be auxiliary to the general board. Accordingly the Illinois Church Conference in annual session, June 4, 1915, acting on the suggestion of a recommendation made by the Sunday School Conference, appointed a committee to investigate the advisability of organizing a state mission board which would have charge of the rural field. The 1916 Conference chose a committee consisting of J. S. Shoemaker, John Nice, John McCulloh, William Brubaker and another brother, to draw up a constitution and if advisable to foster a district mission meeting. The conference assembled at Sterling, in 1917, accepted the constitution which the committee drew up, and appointed John W. McCulloh and John D. Conrad as its representatives on the new board. Aside from these two, the other eight members of the board were to be made up of the district representative to the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the two superintendents of the Chicago Missions, and a representative chosen by each of the five rural congregations.

---

[1] Material from the Illinois District Mission Board Secretary's minutes, Illinois Mennonite Conference minutes; files of the *Gospel Herald;* interviews and correspondence with S. R. Good, Sterling, Illinois and John Roth, Morton, Illinois.

This body held its first meeting July 26, 1917, in the home of S. R. Good, Sterling, Illinois. The organization was effected with the following officers: S. R. Good, president (which position he long continued to fill); J. J. Summers, vice-president; A. H. Leaman, secretary; J. V. Fortner, treasurer; John D. Conrad, member of executive committee. The remainder of the board consisted of John W. McCulloh, A. C. Good, William Nice, Eli Christophel, and A. M. Eash.

A meeting of the executive committee was called at the same place October 26, 1917, to consider a proposed Men's Missionary meeting to be held December 12 and 13 of that year. Considerable publicity was given to secure a large attendance. The Indiana churches were invited to coöperate. The Chicago meeting was a great success in attendance, in program, and in funds raised. At the board meeting held in connection with this program it was decided to give the offering of $2000.00, to the sufferers in Europe by sending the money to the General Mission Treasurer.

At the next board meeting held in connection with the church conference June 1, 1918, a committee was appointed to investigate the East Peoria territory relative to opening a mission Sunday School. At an executive committee meeting held at Sterling, Illinois, September 12, 1918, it was decided to hold the next annual mission meeting in connection with the Dedicatory and Twenty-fifth Anniversary Services of the Home Mission.

This combination of three important elements drew a large crowd to the Mission on January 5-7, 1919. S. F. Coffman, Vineland, Ontario, preached the Dedicatory sermon. Other speakers on this elaborate program were J. S. Shoemaker, Freeport, Illinois; Simon Gingerich, Wayland, Iowa; C. A. Hartzler, Tiskilwa, Illinois; William B. Weaver, Elkhart, Indiana; I. W. Royer, Orrville, Ohio; N. E. Byers, Bluffton, Ohio; A. I. Yoder, West Liberty, Ohio; I. R. Detweiler, Goshen, Indiana; A. M. Eash, 26th St. Mission; A. H. Leaman, Home Mission; J. K. Bixler, Elkhart, Indiana; George J. Lapp, Goshen, Indiana; M. C. Lapp, missionary from India; and S. E. Allgyer, West Liberty, Ohio.

At the sessions of the District Mission Board held during this meeting, the proposition of establishing mission work in Peoria as outlined by John Roth, Morton, Illinois, was accepted.

This board had a resolution read at the 1919 church conference as follows: "Whereas, the mission work of the state is growing and needs the coöperation of each congregation of the state, we therefore request this conference to ask the Amish-Mennonite Ministerial Body to arrange for the appointment of a representative from each congregation of the state, as a member of the Illinois District Mission Board." As a result the number on the board was considerably increased. The meeting held at the Pleasant Grove Congregation near Tremont in connection with the last Western District Amish-Mennonite Church Conference, September 10, 1920, showed the following members at present: A. C. Good, S. R. Good, C. D. Heiser, J. A. Heiser, E. A. Rediger, John Roth, Benjamin Springer, Frank Smucker, J. J. Summers, and Ezra Yordy. John Roth and Ezra Yordy each presented rural sections where mission work might be opened. At the next meeting held at Sterling, June 8, 1921, it was decided to continue the work already started by John Roth at Pleasant Hill near Peoria.

After several years of consideration and postponement a plan of systematic giving was worked out for the congregations whereby each church is assigned some benevolent institution each month to which its monthly missionary offerings are donated. Since the Peoria Mission has been turned over to the charge of the general board, the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the Pleasant Hill rural work is the only mission station the District Board has under its care. New fields have been investigated from time to time. During 1925, John D. Conrad, Sterling, Illinois, made an extensive field trip over the state.

The Board aims to conduct annual mission meetings which might be called District Mission Conferences. These are held during the winter with churches or missions that invite them. A number of well attended sessions have been held.

The Garden Street Mission of Peoria[2]

The Illinois District Mission Board which had been organized in 1917, began to search for fields in which to conduct mission work. At one of their meetings, June 1, 1918, it was decided to investigate East Peoria. A committee was appointed to that task. The investigation seems to have led to the opening of work in Peoria itself. At the Men's Meeting held in connection with the Dedicatory and Anniversary services January 6, 1919, the matter was presented in a paper by John Roth. It was decided to open work at once. Accordingly a committee was appointed, consisting of J. J. Smith, Roanoke Congregation, E. H. Oyer, Metamora Congregation, J. J. Summers, Union Congregation, John Roth, Pleasant Grove Congregation, and C. E. Martin, Hopedale Congregation, to investigate and launch the work if found advisable.

---

[2] Material from Illinois District Mission Board secretary's minutes; pamphlet Harnish, *Fifth Anniversary of the Peoria Mission;* file of *Gospel Herald;* interviews and correspondence with S. R. Good, Sterling, Illinois, John Roth, Morton, Illinois, John L. Harnish, Peoria, Illinois, and Earl Miller, Peoria, Illinois.

After several trips to Peoria, a suitable building was located at 900 Garden Street. When the Terre Haute Brewing Company erected this two story frame building and fitted it out for a first class saloon they certainly did not dream that some day their bar would be changed to a pulpit. The building, found to be vacant, was rented, and cleaned for Gospel services. The building is twenty-four by fifty-six feet, two stories high, with a good-sized back yard and another building twenty by thirty feet, which is used as a garage. On the first floor is the chapel, which is twenty-four by forty-four feet, and the primary room twenty-four by twelve feet. Both these rooms are arranged so they can be divided by curtains into suitable class rooms.

The first Sunday School service was held February 16, 1919, with an attendance of over one hundred, a number from the neighboring congregations being present. For the first few months Sunday School was conducted by John Roth of Morton as superintendent. He and the teachers who were members of the near-by country congregations came in each Sunday afternoon. Then because resident workers could not be secured the Sunday School was discontinued.

At the meeting of the board, May 28, 1919, at Metamora, John L. Harnish, Viola Ulrich, (later Mrs. Harnish), and Martha Nofsinger, were appointed as stationed workers. In order to keep the building from being sold to another party the committee had purchased it during the spring. The necessary funds of $4000.00 had been secured by forty brethren each taking a share of a hundred dollars. Following the purchase some badly needed repairs were made. A second story porch was added to the rear and the buildings painted so it made a very neat and practical missionary institution.

In August the workers moved in, occupying the second floor. Sunday School was reopened, and soon Sunday evening preaching services and week-day evening meetings were started. Ezra Yordy of the Roanoke Congregation, A. L. Buzzard of the Union Congregation, and Samuel Gerber of the Pleasant Grove Congregation, who also has bishop oversight of the congregation, were the usual ones who took turns in supplying the pulpit. A number of young brethren and sisters came in regularly for a while to help in the Sunday School.

In 1921, after the Illinois Congregations had raised the money to repay the forty shareholders, the Mission was turned over to the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, under whose control it is at present. The Mission Congregation was organized on October 29, 1922, by Bishop Samuel Gerber. Two foreign countries, Germany and Belgium, and the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, and different parts of Illinois are represented as the birthplace and childhood home of the members of the congregation which at present numbers about two dozen. There are also several members from country congregations who attend the services.

On December 24, 1922, the superintendent John L. Harnish was ordained to the ministry by bishops J. S. Shoemaker and Samuel Gerber. In the summer of 1923 a two weeks' revival meeting was conducted in a tent by C. F. Derstine with good results. Other evangelists who have held meetings in the mission are: J. W. Hess, A. C. Good and I. W. Royer. While I. W. Royer was there the Fifth Anniversary of the Mission was observed on February 17, 1924. Owing to the inclement weather and icy roads those of the rural congregations were not able to attend.

Among the methods used in bringing the gospel to the people have been the following: Preaching of God's Word, Sunday School, fresh air work, home department, cradle roll, mid-week Bible classes, prayer meetings, cottage meetings, tent meetings, street meetings, hospital and visitation work, distribution of Christian literature such as tracts and Bibles, and giving material in the way of food and clothing to the needy. The following is the weekly program of services: Sunday: 10:00 A. M. Sunday School; 11:00 A. M. Morning worship; 6:30 P. M. Children's Meeting; 7:15 P. M. Christian Worker's Meeting; 8:00 P. M. Preaching service; Tuesday: 7:30 P. M. Cottage Prayer Meeting; Thursday: 7:30 P. M. Bible study and prayer service; Saturday (during summer) 7:30 P. M. street meeting.

From about a dozen present the first few Sundays after the Sunday School was reopened in August, 1919, the attendance steadily increased until within a year it had almost reached a hundred. At least two hundred fifty different individuals have been enrolled in the Sunday School. "A number have moved out of the community, while others have proved unfaithful and have given up the battle for the truth and the right." About fifty have received Bibles, books, and Testaments for perfect yearly attendance. Some have a record of perfect attendance for over four years.

Along the line of giving, the Sunday School and Congregation have done quite well. During the years 1922-23, the Sunday School supported a Near East orphan and an India orphan. During one quarter the Sunday School and congregation gave for all purposes, $175.00, over half of which went for foreign missions and relief work, the balance for the local Sunday School and church work. During the summer of 1923 eight scholars used quarters from the quarter fund, earning $9.25 which was sent to the General Treasurer for the support of South America missionary children.

During the summer groups of Sunday School pupils have been sent to the country into the homes of large-hearted brethren and sisters of the near-by congregations, where they have greatly enjoyed a two weeks' outing. The Christian influences going out from these homes make lasting impressions upon the children. Since regular attendance is required to entitle the pupil to a vacation, it is also a means of building up the Sunday School.

A large number of garments have been given out to the needy. The sewing circles have kept the clothing dispensary well supplied. Provisions are also given to poor families when in need. At one time the mission paid for two quarts of milk a day for a family with six children, the mother of whom was a faithful member of the Mission. Also street car fare has been supplied to others to enable them to attend the services, and often flowers are purchased for the sick. During the flower season in the country, flowers have been sent in for this purpose by interested friends. Each Christmas from fifty to sixty large baskets laden with provisions sent in from different congregations have been distributed to as many homes, where they were much appreciated.

The following gives a list of those who have served at the Mission:

Worker, Address	**Service Period**	**Date**
Emma (King) Risser, Hesston, Kans.	2 weeks	1919
Martha Nofsinger, Washington, Ill.	4 weeks	1919
Phoebe Bachman, Cazenovia, Ill.	3 months	1920
Alma (Eigsti) Yordy, Manson, Ia.	1 year	1920-21
Minnie Campbell, Canton, O.	7 months	1921-22
Matilda Speicher, Shipshewana, Ind.	few months	1922
Elizabeth Schantz, Hopedale, Ill.	1 year	1922-23
Ada Orendorff, Flanagan, Ill.	over 1 year	1924-25
John L. Harnish, Eureka, Ill. (Supt.)	over 6 years	1919-25
Viola Harnish, Eureka, Ill. (matron)	over 6 years	1919-25
Lloy Kniss, Masontown, Pa.	6 months	1925
Mrs. Lloy Kniss, Masontown, Pa. (matron)	6 months	1925
Earl Miller, Lima, Ohio (Supt.)	since 1925	
Mrs. Earl Miller, Lima, Ohio (matron)	since 1925	

In the spring of 1925, the Harnish family found it necessary to go to Colorado on account of Mrs. Harnish's health. About April 1, Lloy Kniss of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, took charge temporarily. He was followed by

Earl Miller who with his wife came to take charge of the mission on October 8, 1925. Miller, who had been superintendent of the Mission at Lima, Ohio, was ordained October 4, 1925, and was transferred to Peoria by the Board. In 1929 he resigned, and C. Warren Long was appointed as superintendent.

The Pleasant Hill Rural Mission[3]

Pleasant Hill is the name of a school district and interurban station four miles northwest of Morton and five miles southeast of Peoria, Illinois. In this community, which is the dividing line of the prairie and the timber lands, there was formerly a Methodist Church which was abandoned over forty years ago. For a number of years after that there was no religious work carried on in the community.

In 1916 the Evangelical Church opened a Sunday School in the school house, and for some time they conducted a flourishing Sunday School. After eight months the interest died out and the school was closed for lack of scholars. In September, 1920, John Roth presented the community to the Illinois District Mission Board as an opening for a Sunday School. He and Benjamin Springer were appointed to investigate. On September 27, they made a careful canvass of the community and visited and interviewed a number of homes. It was found that most of the people desired a Sunday School and stated their intention to support one. The matter was presented to the District Mission Board and after some consideration it was decided to open a Sunday School in the school house. Mr. and Mrs. John Roth offered their services to the board. Since they lived in the same school district they were given charge of the work. When the school board was asked for permission to hold services some of the members refused to give their consent but finally withdrew their objections.

---

[3] Material from Secretary's minutes of the Illinois District Mission Board and interviews and correspondence with John Roth, Morton, Illinois, A. C. Good and S. R. Good, Sterling, Illinois, and S. Jay Hostetler, Pleasant Hill near Peoria, Illinois.

The first services were held on November 21, 1920 when thirty-three were present representing nineteen different families. After conducting the services for over a year, it was decided to use more aggressive methods. Arrangements were made to have J. A. Heiser of Fisher, Illinois, hold evangelistic meetings assisted by a Gospel team from Goshen College. Evangelistic meetings have been held each year since that time, but the work is not without its difficulties and several have fallen back.

A congregation was organized March 8, 1924 with nineteen members, and John Roth was given charge of the congregation. The present membership of the Sunday School is about seventy, but with careful directing and teaching the church feels that there will be a number of others added. There are also some discouraging features connected with the work. Since the work started another church also decided to have services in the same school house, but the attempt soon ran its course.

In the school district there are one hundred and fifty families and seventy-five children attending public school. Most of the men work in offices or factories in Peoria. It is very difficult to reach the men and the older people. A few of the people are hostile toward the work and do all they can to destroy its influence but most are friendly. None of the members of the community know anything of the teachings of the Mennonite Church except by hearsay.

In November, 1923, Ruth Smucker (Magnuson) came to help in the work. She spent most of her time in visitation and home department work. During her four months' stay in the community the attendance of Sunday School was increased. She has revisited the community many times since, staying perhaps a week or more at a time. During the summer of 1924 Elizabeth Schantz spent some time visiting in the interests of the work.

The congregation has regular church services, an organized Sunday School, home department, and cradle roll. It has also organized a literary society for the moral and social benefit of its young people.

Since the work was severely handicapped by lack of helpers, Mr. and Mrs. S. Jay Hostetler from Middlebury, Indiana, were persuaded to move into the community in June, 1925. They were partially supported by the Illinois District Mission Board which still retains jurisdiction over this rural mission. Later Hostetlers were called to have charge of the congregation at Cullom. More recently Mr. and Mrs. Carl Magnuson of Tiskilwa have moved to the district and have active charge of the work. Ezra Yordy has bishop oversight.

The Women's District Missionary Society[4]

After the Chicago Home Mission was opened in 1893 miscellaneous gifts of clothing and provisions were sent in from the congregations. As the mission developed, this form of contribution became a fixed custom. By 1900 some of the congregations began to form organizations of women, called Sewing meetings, which took charge of the local work in the making of garments and supplies for the needy. These organizations are now more familiarly known as Sewing Circles. The Circles perform duties similar to "The Ladies' Aids" of other denominations.

---

[4] There was no single large source from which to draw the information for the history of this society. A great number of people were questioned in person and in writing but none were able to furnish any great amount of information. The secretary's minutes which do not seem to have been regularly recorded have been misplaced and so were not available.

However, the latter term is not in vogue among the Mennonites.

In 1911 through the efforts of several devoted women work was begun towards a general society of sewing circles. At a called meeting a year or so later at West Liberty, Ohio, a committee was elected. It investigated the idea and developed it until at the General Conference at Yellow Creek near Elkhart, Indiana, in 1917, general officers and branch secretaries to cover the entire church were elected. This developed into "The Mennonite Women's Missionary Society."

A preliminary constitution was drawn up in 1919 and the permanent one as adopted was published in 1924. Article II states the purpose of the body as follows: "Sec. 1.—The purpose of this organization shall be to enlist all the women and girls of the Mennonite Church in prayer and efforts for home and foreign missions, to acquire and diffuse the information needed, to collect money and other gifts for the support of home and foreign missionaries and missionary work and for the promotion of the spiritual and temporal welfare of those among whom they labor. Sec. 2.—This organization shall work as helpers of the General Mission Board and other agencies of the Mennonite Church organized for missionary and benevolent purposes."

The general organization is divided into branches or districts. The districts, which in most cases correspond to the district conferences, are composed of the local sewing circles. A member of a local circle which belongs to a district is considered a member of the general organization. The organization holds its meetings biennially. The early officers were: Mrs. M. C. Cressman, president, Kitchener, Ontario; Mrs. Clara E. Steiner, secretary, Columbus Grove, Ohio; Miss Ruth A. Yoder, treasurer, Bellefontaine, Ohio; Mrs. J. S. Gerig, Smithville, Ohio; Mrs. Crissie Y. Shank, secretary of literature, Orrville, Ohio; Mrs. A. E. Kreider, secretary of girls' work, Goshen, Indiana. Recently the organization has been modified and been brought under more direct control of the general mission board.

The organization is quite active. It aims to discover the places of need and furnish that information to the circles. Since March 1, 1919, the general secretary has issued a letter which at first was annual but now comes forth regularly each month. Blanks are furnished and statistics gathered. Some literature is written and printed in pamphlet form. "The Booklet of Prayer for 1926" issued by the society is a very neat piece of work. This material from the general committee is disseminated by placing it in the hands of the district secretaries who in turn send it to the local secretaries of the circles. The district organization is simply a connecting link between the local and general organizations. However a district in itself can be quite active if it sets up an aggressive program.

The Illinois branch or district was created at the original general session at Yellow Creek in the fall of 1917, when Mrs. Lydia H. Smith, Flanagan, Illinois, was appointed secretary for the Illinois district. The district secretaries were to encourage their districts to organize as soon as possible. Though the Amish-Mennonites and Mennonites had not at this time been merged into one conference, the local circles of both were to compose the Illinois District of the Women's Missionary Society.

The first meeting was held at the Chicago Home Mission during the Dedicatory and Twenty-fifth Anniversary service on January 6, 1919. The program with synopsis of speeches was quite fully recorded in the general report of those services.[5] Mrs. Amanda Leaman presided. The main speakers were, Mrs. Clara E. Steiner, Ada Orendorff, and Mrs. A. M. Eash. The officers elected were: Melinda Ebersole, president (1919-1921); Lydia Smith, secretary (1919-1923). Amanda Leaman became president in 1921, and was followed by Mrs. Cora Buzzard. Lydia H. Smith was secretary until 1923. The district, owing chiefly to the efforts of the secretary, was able to report with Ontario as being one of the only two districts having a circle in each local congregation of the district by May 1, 1923. A number of Girls' Circles had also been started in the state. These were promoted by Mrs. Smith and Mrs. A. E. Kreider. Following Mrs. Smith as secretary came Ada Orendorff who held that office until 1925, when Mrs. Ruth Smucker (Magnuson) was elected.

---

[5] See *Report of Dedicatory Service and Missionary Conference* held at the Home Mission, Chicago, Illinois, January 5-7, 1919, pp. 17-23.

Meetings are held annually or oftener usually in connection with both the District Mission Meetings during the winter and the District Church Conference in the fall. In the response to calls for help along the line of sewing and making up provisions the Illinois district is regarded as being very active. It has helped to furnish the Eureka Old People's Home, has furnished a guest room for the missionaries' homes in India and has helped build the teachers' home in India. In the matter of mission study classes and reading circle work very little has been done. The organization has neither been sanctioned or opposed by the ministerial body. However it seems to be taken for granted that the women need an organization through which to work and that it is rendering valuable service.

The Mennonite Home for the Aged at Eureka[6]

When the Old People's Home burned near Orrville, Ohio on May 19, 1920, there was no place to care for the aged of the western conferences. The Franconia Conference Home at Souderton, Pennsylvania, the Lancaster Conference Home, and some private parties very kindly opened their doors for these unfortunate people. The Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities investigated the matter of building, and found a hearty desire for an Old People's Home in Illinois. They finally granted the request, and took steps to find the proper location. J. S. Shoemaker, George Grieser, and J. D. Smith with other Illinois brethren were appointed to investigate prospective sites.

---

[6] Material for this section from J. D. Smith, superintendent of the Home, Eureka, Illinois; *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory,* 1923, p. 17 ff; and file of *Gospel Herald.*

This committee brought their findings to the Board, who decided that Eureka, Illinois, was the most central place. The churches surrounding Eureka were very favorable. The town also gave it a hearty welcome, even offering to help pay for the same. This placed the "Home" in a congenial situation.

On May 19, 1921 the Mission Board, assembled in its annual meeting at the Roanoke Congregation near Eureka, appointed the Building Committee composed of three brethren, Sanford Yoder, Kalona, Iowa; J. D. Smith, Metamora, Illinois; and Jacob Garber, Eureka, Illinois. The first ground was broken on June 19, 1921.

The Home is situated at the edge of Eureka, beautifully located on the ridge overlooking the town. A cement road runs past the grounds. There are fifty native maple trees around the building. This site was formerly the Methodist Camp Meeting Grounds, and the former owners were glad to know that a religious institution would occupy the place. The town offered fire protection for the buildings. There are eighteen acres in the tract of land; six acres for pasture, seven for farming, and five lots for the buildings. The price paid was $10,000, which was much cheaper than the surrounding land because of the purpose for which it was to be used.

Brother Smith and his helpers have planted one hundred and fifty trees, including pear, plum, peach, apple, apricot, and cherry trees. They also planted eighty grapevines. Shrubbery has been placed about the lawn for ornamental purposes. Much of this was donated by Sunday School scholars throughout the state.

The main building is of dark red brick and covers a space of seventy-eight by eighty-four feet. It is two stories high above a basement which is largely out of the ground. This building is nearly square with a court space between the two wings which extend backwards. The building has thirty-two single and double bed-rooms, about sixty rooms altogether, sixteen hundred feet of floor space, one hundred twenty-two windows, and seventy-one doors. There are six good-sized porches in the building, which are very practical for the invalids and those who are well and can go outside. The building is equipped with hot and cold water systems, and is electrically lighted. The Home will accommodate forty people, one to a bed. The maximum capacity of the Home is sixty-five to seventy persons. The plant cost approximately fifty thousand dollars. It was dedicated on July 23, 1922 by Sanford Yoder.

J. D. Smith, and Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Derstine were appointed to bring the first group of eight inmates from the eastern Homes. When they arrived at Eureka on June 14, 1922 there was a large crowd at the depot to give them a glad welcome. When the helpless ones were seen and carried from the train some tears were shed, and none regretted the work which had been undertaken. At present there are twenty-two in the Home, and others on the waiting list.

The original local board appointed by the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, was: J. D. Smith, Eureka; J. D. Garber, Eureka; Andrew Birky, Fisher; Jacob Orendorff, Flanagan; and B. J. Schertz, Eureka. The superintendent is J. D. Smith, formerly of Metamora. He has capably taken his place and is highly appreciated by the inmates. He, with Jacob Garber, materially reduced the cost of building by supervising the work without salary. The Smiths now live in their own newly erected home nearby. Mattie Schertz of Flanagan, was secured as matron. Matilda Speicher, a veteran worker for the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, having served at the Old Folks' Home of Ohio, and two mission stations, was also made a worker in the Home. Ida Yoder was given charge of the kitchen and dining room. She had rendered similar service at the Chicago Home Mission.

Since the Home is not merely an institution of the Illinois people but part of the general church work controlled by the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the funds for construction were raised by J. D. Smith and others in the congregations throughout the West. However the Illinois congregations contributed the larger share. The Sisters' Sewing Circles nobly responded by furnishing bedding, draperies, and cash.

Two brethren, Stalter and Neuhauser, the latter now deceased, each deeded to the Board for endowment eighty acres of land for the future support of the home. Congregations also pay for the support of some of their inmates. This is practical for the larger congregations. Sometimes relatives and others support the inmates. Some help comes from the produce of the place, such as vegetables and fruit. Amos Neuhauser donated one of his Holstein cows, and more will be added later. The chickens are expected to help somewhat. A useful barn has been built on the place.

A Christian atmosphere pervades the place. Singing is frequently heard. There is daily worship and prayer in the Home. Public worship is held every Sabbath at 3 o'clock. Mid-week prayer meetings are also conducted.

Visiting ministers are always appreciated and services are held any evening when ministers are present. There is a spirit of brotherliness and Christian fellowship in the home.

The biennial session of the General Conference was held at the Home under a large tent during the last week of August, 1925. It proved to be an excellent location for the meeting. A very large crowd attended. On one day over twelve hundred cars were parked in the near-by grove.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE CONFERENCE MERGER

In the confusion of the Mennonite branches thus far studied one quite encouraging feature appears, and that is the merging of two of the larger divisions. The only union to be effected in the state was that made between the Amish-Mennonites and the (old) Mennonites, which became an organic union. The union of the conferences, which was completed in 1921, had been developing for a long time, in fact from the arrival of the first Mennonite settlers in 1833. Both Amish and Mennonite settlers came to practically the same territory between the present day cities of Peoria and Washington. There was probably no unnecessary association at first but relations developed eventually. When the Mennonites near Washington relocated their church house at its present site, in 1888, it was called the Union Church. Although the information has not been verified beyond a doubt, the statement has been made that this name was given expressing the purpose of this church to invite both Mennonites and Amish into its membership.

Perhaps the earliest tendencies toward unification came through the publication of the *Herald of Truth* which first appeared in Chicago in 1864. The subscription lists which were published in the early issues show subscribers coming from both Amish-Mennonites and Mennonites in the state of Illinois. Articles written by members of both branches appeared in its columns frequently. Though this did not form a direct bond between the two branches, the fact that they supported a church paper in common could not but have its unifying influence. Later, when a publication board was formed, both conferences of these two branches appointed members to serve upon it. When John S. Coffman conducted his evangelistic work he frequently went into the Amish churches and in turn the Amish came to the Mennonite services. When the Home Mission was started in Chicago in 1893 it met with as much favor among the Amish-Mennonites as among the Mennonites, both of whom gave support and provisions. As the Chicago work grew it became more and more a unifying force. When the General Conference was in its formative period during the late nineties both branches in their conference sessions passed motions favoring it. Later each appointed delegates to the General Conference sessions, thus admitting that they were parts of the same whole. When the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference held its sessions in Illinois the Mennonites patronized it. Some of the ministers even took part on the program. J. S. Shoemaker, Mennonite bishop, at one time served as moderator. In like manner during sessions of the Illinois Mennonite Conferences the Amish reciprocated.

These forms of coöperation though unofficial were nevertheless positive. Official action between the bodies began to develop in the Sunday School Conference work. Each branch had its own Sunday School Conference in connection with its annual church conference. When the Western District Amish-Mennonites held their sessions in states beyond the Mississippi it was impossible for many of the Illinois members to attend. Therefore they began to attend and coöperate in the Mennonite Sunday School Conference held in Illinois. Even when their own conference was held in the state coöperation could continue because their session was held during the fall while that of the Mennonites was held in the spring. Frequently many attended both sessions. In 1913 the Illinois Church Conference in session at Morrison drew up a statement saying that since the Amish-Mennonites were not officially represented on the Sunday School Executive Committee they would request the Illinois Amish ministerial meeting to appoint two members. This suggestion however was not followed by the Amish until 1919 when the first joint session was held at Metamora.[1] The work of the Illinois District Mission Board soon included both conferences. It had originated through the Mennonites in 1917, but in 1919 the Amish-Mennonite congregations were asked to appoint representatives upon the Board. The Mission Meetings were attended by members of both branches. The Peoria Mission,[2] opened that same year by the Board, was promoted chiefly by a local committee composed of Amish-Mennonites from the neighboring congregations. The Women's District Missionary Society, started in 1917, included the sewing circles of both branches.[3]

Thus by 1919, all the activities of the Mennonites and Amish-Mennonites in Illinois had been combined with the exception of the respective conference organizations. Since the bodies were united in spirit and action, the particular organizations in existence were but holdovers from a period when real division existed. Therefore the logical step was to merge them. However this was not a matter which concerned the people of Illinois alone for the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference comprised not only Amish-Mennonites in Illinois but those in the states beyond the Mississippi River. The Illinois Amish-Mennonites could have withdrawn from that conference, but a better plan was devised in which the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference dissolved and its congregations united with the Mennonites according to geographical convenience.

---

[1] See Chap. XI, the Illinois District Mennonite Conference.

[2] See Chap. XXXIV, the Garden Street Mission of Peoria.

[3] See preceding Chap. XXXIV, the Women's Missionary Society.

It was necessary to get each of the several conferences involved, to consent to such an arrangement. By 1919, the five conferences involved, namely, the Western District Amish-Mennonite, and the Mennonite districts of Illinois, Missouri-Iowa, Kansas-Nebraska, and Pacific Coast, had acted favorably. Each appointed a unification committee which when combined formed a merging body of twenty-four members.

Two meetings were held at Milford, Nebraska where a plan for merging was worked out. The second report of this committee was as follows:[4] "We the undersigned committee, appointed by our respective conferences to consider the advisability of merging and redistricting our western conferences and prepare a report for the consideration of these bodies, beg leave to submit the following:

"At our meeting held at East Fairview Church near Milford, Nebraska, May 26 and 27, 1920, after prayerful consideration of the work before us, we prepared the following report for consideration by our congregations: (The report referred to is a former report by the same committee proposing a plan for merging and redistricting our western conference which report has been submitted to the congregations in the districts affected by the merger.)

"The above report was submitted to the various congregations throughout the conference districts by the bishops in charge or by brethren under their direction. Of the sixty-four congregations reporting, thirty-nine are recorded as unanimously in favor of the merging. In two congregations there were three votes recorded against, the rest in favor. The total vote of the members of the remaining twenty-three congregations was as follows: in favor, 1526; not in favor, 108;[5] undecided 13. This does not include members giving no expression. We are grateful to God that thus far His Spirit has led and that there has been a marked support of the movement by all the conferences, and a large majority of the membership throughout the districts. We hereby express the hope that by the time this work is completed it may have the united support of every member in our congregations.

---

[4] Printed in *Gospel Herald,* Vol. XIII, October 26, 1920, p. 607.

[5] It is curious to note that one Amish-Mennonite objected to the merger because he thought the Mennonites were more strongly opposed to the use of tobacco than was his own conference.

"With more than nine-tenths of the entire vote cast being in favor of the conferences merging and no serious objections against it being in evidence, we believe that the time has come when steps should be taken towards the merging and redistricting of our conferences, and therefore recommend the following: (of the sixteen recommendations only the tenth and eleventh are transcribed here)

"That the following brethren be appointed as executive committees of their respective districts: Illinois: Samuel Gerber, J. S. Shoemaker, A. A. Schrock, A. C. Good, A. L. Buzzard, C. A. Hartzler; Iowa-Nebraska: S. C. Yoder, D. G. Lapp, Perry Blosser, Simon Gingerich, J. E. Zimmerman, C. J. Garber; Kansas-Missouri: J. M. Kreider, I. Z. Hartzler, P. J. Shenk, I. J. Zimmerman, J. A. Heatwole, C. D. Yoder, L. H. Miller, John Slagel; Pacific Coast: S. G. Shetler, A. P. Troyer, C. R. Gerig, J. P. Bontrager, M. E. Brenneman, Fred Gingerich; North Dakota: I. S. Mast, L. A. Kauffman, J. C. Gingerich.

"That it be the duty of these executive committees to designate the time and place of holding the first conference in their respective districts, to provide for the necessary programs, and to organize the conferences—the chairman of each executive committee to be the temporary moderator of the conference.

"Yours for the cause of Christ and the welfare of the Church.

(Signed by)

Daniel Kauffman, Chairman, Simon Gingerich, Secretary, A. P. Troyer, C. R. Gerig, S. G. Shetler, Peter Kennell, Joseph Zimmerman, J. A. Heatwole, C. D. Yoder, Joe C. Driver, Levi Miller, J. M. Kreider, A. G. Yoder, Samuel Gerber, John Nice, A. A. Schrock, J. S. Shoemaker, C. A. Hartzler, and A. C. Good."

During the course of the year 1920 the several conferences gave their stamp of approval. The last Western District Amish-Mennonite conference was held at Tremont, Illinois, in September, 1920. The next year the resultant conferences held their first meetings. The new Illinois Mennonite Conference, composed of the congregations of the old one by that name and the Amish-Mennonite congregations within the geographical limits of Illinois, met at the Science Ridge Church near Sterling, June 7-9, 1921. Thus after two and a quarter centuries the two branches which separated in Switzerland, 1693, were again one, at least as far as these Mennonites in this limited territory were concerned. The new "Constitution" and "Rules and Discipline" were printed together and issued in 1922.

It was not a case of the Amish joining an established Mennonite body for it was true merging. Neither branch gave up more than the other in uniting. If anything the sacrifice was made by the Mennonite laymen who up to this time had a vote in conference. There has been some complaint in the curtailment of lay voting. The request of the young people to form a state literary society of their own was rejected by the ministerial body at their 1925 session. However no serious friction has developed within the conference and so far the state has been free from such upheavals as have befallen other district conferences in recent years.

In 1922 the conference at Hopedale drew a large crowd. Over seven hundred cars were reported to have been parked on the grounds during one day's meeting. The conferences that followed, East Bend near Fisher, 1923, and Flanagan, 1924, showed no less interest. The 1925 session was held at the Eureka Home for the Aged in connection with the General Conference which of course overshadowed it. Later conferences have been held as follows: 1926, Tiskilwa; 1927, Sterling; 1928, Freeport; 1929, Harmony.

While the conference itself has functioned very smoothly it would be false to give the impression that the congregations had no troubles. As in all denominations as well as among the other Mennonite groups there were painful contentions. Some of these were caused by dominating families, others by narrow leadership, others by the formation of parties in the ranks, and others by unworthy members. It is easy for human nature to become jealous and this trait has been manifested far too much. The contentions have held the Church down to much smaller numbers than it deserved. It is to be hoped that the future will show improvements along this line. This criticism may give the impression that the Illinois people have progressed very slowly. This however is not true. Many changes have come into the life of the people in recent years, some for better, others for worse.

The changes of the times have made their impress upon these Mennonite people. Because the settlements were small the people could not help being influenced by their neighbors. Since the young folks have started attending the high schools they have been brought closely into contact with the modern world. All these and many other things have served to produce changes in the life and habits of the people themselves. The people have almost entirely adopted the dress of the times. While the bonnet is still worn it no longer has a large frill and does not come forward so far over the face. The devotional covering is still worn in meetings. Among the men, very few besides the ministry wear the "plain" coat. In fact this was never the practice among the Amish Mennonites. However, with these changes, the church still upholds its doctrine of simplicity of dress. The council meetings, preceding communion services, formerly held semi-secretly in the ante-room are now conducted in assembly by rising vote of those wishing to commune.

The change in attitude on education has been for the better. Contributions are made for the church schools and numbers of the young people are attending colleges. Particularly since the World War the support of the church schools has been very generous both in finances and attendance. Since 1924 Goshen College is recognized as the church college for the state of Illinois. An average of 15 students annually attend the school.

Economically the people have become the most prosperous farmers in the state. However, the farms are so nearly all taken up that many of the young people will have to seek homes elsewhere. Some are beginning to take up other occupations.

Illinois has contributed much to the progress of the church in general. Some of her leaders aided in the formation of the General Conference. The conference held its second session in the state. In the field of education, Illinois contributed the first college president[6] as well as considerable means. The Chicago Mission was the first of its kind in the entire church and ante-dated the first foreign mission by several years. In this mission, Illinois gave the first permanently stationed worker.[7] Illinois has been represented in the foreign field in person[8] and purse. The church paper originated and was first edited, printed, and published in Chicago.[9] The first and only president of the publication board was from this district conference.[10] The state furnishes personal, moral, and financial support to all of the various church enterprises.

---

[6] N. E. Byers at Goshen College 1903-1913. I. R. Detweiler also from Illinois served as acting president in later years.

[7] Melinda Ebersole who served for twenty years.

[8] I. R. Detweiler, Mrs. J. N. Kaufman, Mrs. Esther Ebersole Lapp (deceased), Ralph and Alma Smucker, etc.

[9] The *Herald of Truth,* see Chap. XXIX.

---

[10] J. S. Shoemaker helped to organize the first board and has been its president from the beginning.

BOOK III

THE DEFENSELESS MENNONITES

(Egly Amish)

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE WORK OF HENRY EGLY

A brief review of the Amish settlements will be given here in order to understand the field into which a new movement was to make its way. The Amish settlers had spread over central Illinois in the territory north and west from Bloomington and north, south, and east from Peoria. The following nine general and more or less vague congregations were in existence:

EARLY AMISH CONGREGATIONS IN ILLINOIS

Original Congregation	Date of Organization	Present Name & Branch
1. Partridge Creek, Spring Bay	(1833)	The Amish-Mennonite congregation near Metamora, Woodford County.
2. Mackinaw River Meeting	(1835)	The two Amish-Mennonite congregations of Roanoke and Goodfield, Woodford County.
3. Putnam County	(1835)	The Willow Springs Amish-Mennonite congregation near Tiskilwa, Bureau County.
4. Wesley City	(1837)	The Defenseless Mennonite congregation near Groveland, Tazewell County.
5. Dillon Creek	(1837)	The Pleasant Grove Amish-Mennonite congregation near Tremont, Tazewell County.
6. Rock Creek, Yoder Church	(1851)	The Central Conference Mennonite church called North Danvers, McLean County.
7. Hessians south of Danvers	(1854)	The Central Conference Mennonite church, in Danvers, McLean County.
8. Delavan Prairie	(1854)	The Amish-Mennonite congregation near Hopedale. Tazewell County.
9. Gridley Prairie	(1860)	The Waldo Amish-Mennonite congregation near Flanagan and mother to the Salem Defenseless Mennonite congregation near Gridley and the Central Conference Mennonite congregation near Flanagan, Livingston County.

About this time a different settlement was opened up in Moultrie and Douglas Counties. But since it retained Old Order Amish religious practices and had no connection with the Bloomington-Peoria settlement, it is given separate treatment in a section of its own.[1]

As already suggested, some of the Amish in these settlements between Peoria and Bloomington had come to feel that the church was too inactive. Some, especially from the Dillon Creek and Partridge Churches, answered the appeal to the movement from without and joined with the New Amish.

During the Civil War and perhaps in part due to the atmosphere that accompanied it, a movement[2] arose this time within the Amish membership itself, which was designed to renew the spiritual life then conceived as dead. The movement did not arise in Illinois, but among the Amish of Adams County, Indiana. However it was soon to be felt in Illinois, and especially in the Wesley City and Gridley Prairie congregations.

The leader who promoted "the regenerated life" and eventually founded the separate branch of Defenseless Mennonites was Henry Egly. He was born in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Germany, on the 5th of April, 1824. From Baden he came early to Butler County, Ohio, in August, 1837, together with his father and two sisters. There he was received as a member of the congregation by baptism in his seventeenth year. When twenty-five, he married Catherine Goldschmidt in 1849. To this union were born eight children, seven of whom still live: six sons, Jacob, Henry, Samuel, Joseph, Abraham and Christian and two daughters, Magdalena and Kathryn. A daughter died several years ago. There are 25 grandchildren. In 1850 he moved from Butler County, Ohio, to Geneva, Adams County, Indiana where he lived until his death, June 23, 1890. The same year in which he arrived in Indiana he was elected by lot for the service of deacon, which he held for three and one-half years. On Whitsuntide, 1854, he was elected preacher by unanimous vote, serving in this capacity for four years. He was elected as bishop, in 1858, again by unanimous vote. Up to the time of his death he worked earnestly and faithfully for the cause. The funeral was held July 25, 1890, in the church-house in which he had served for so many years.

---

[1] See Book V, Chap. LV, "The Arthur Settlement."

[2] Material for this chapter from D. N. Claudon and C. R. Egle, Meadows, Ill., and Smith, *Mennonites of America,* p. 246 ff. Also compare Chap. III.

Egly, while bishop of his Amish Church, in Indiana, became what he felt as truly converted. After this experience in his own life, he required a personal experience of forgiveness of sins and change of heart of all those who wished to partake of the Lord's Supper. Also, he rebaptized those, and those only, who had not had this experience before they were baptized, in order to make sure that their baptism could be the answer of a good conscience towards God.

About 1864 Egly began to urge the necessity of a definite experience of regeneration in the religious life. His charges against the church were that it was too formal, that applicants for membership, especially among the younger element, were received with insufficient preliminary instruction, that the members were lacking in spiritual life and that they were not strict enough in maintaining the old customs, especially with regard to dress. Some of these charges no doubt were the result of personal contention, but that the church at this time frequently paid more attention to the letter than to the spirit there can be no doubt. Even though some of these charges were well founded, it cannot be said that Egly and his immediate followers reduced this formality to a very appreciable extent. It simply manifested itself among them in another direction.

No sooner had Egly made the announcement than half of the congregation said that they would have no more to do with him. About fifty per cent of those remaining faithful to him claimed that they had had a personal experience of salvation, either before they were baptized in the old church or after their baptism. These said that they would move forward and continue to pray for those who had not had such experience in the hope that the latter might receive this experimental knowledge of conversion and regeneration, and then join them also.

In 1866 Egly organized his own church. The movement spread to other places in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. In all these places Egly used his talents to strengthen the cause. His revival meetings throughout the remainder of the decade won many converts who later became leaders in the conference when it was organized. Egly gave much of his time and energy to the development of the branch.

When the movement spread to Illinois it was fostered in Livingston County by Joseph Rediger, minister of the Gridley Prairie congregation. Rediger, with the assistance of Egly, who was a distant relative of his and with whom he had had some communication before on the subject, organized a small "Egly" church[3] out of a few of the dissatisfied members of the Gridley congregation.

In a similar manner the movement was promoted in Tazewell County. Michael Moseman, one of the pioneer bishops of the state, and Nicholas Roth, both in charge of the Wesley City congregation, turned to the new faith. Practically all of their congregation went with them.[4] Some from the Dillon Creek settlement also cast their lot with them. These were the only two Defenseless Mennonite congregations to be organized in Illinois.

---

[3] See Chap. XXXVII, "The Salem Congregation near Gridley."

[4] See Chap. XXXVIII, "The Congregation near Groveland."

From these small beginnings, through evangelism, new settlements and church extension, the following congregations have developed:[5]

DEFENSELESS MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS, 1925

Location	No. Members	Pastors	Address
Archbold, Ohio	160	Bishop E. M. Slagle Samuel Rupp	Archbold, Ohio Archbold, Ohio
Bluffton, Ohio	50	Levi Mellinger Harry Bertsche	Bluffton, Ohio Bluffton, Ohio
Pioneer, Ohio	85	Levi Zehr Aaron Slagle	Pioneer, Ohio Pioneer, Ohio
Pemberville, Ohio	10	Earl Frake	Pemberville, Ohio
Berne, Ind.	150	Bishop Eli Lantz C. N. Stucky	Berne, Ind. Berne, Ind.
Grabill, Ind.	90	Jerry Sauder David Sauder Irwin Klopfenstein	Grabill, Ind. Grabill, Ind. Grabill, Ind.
LaFayette, Ind.	35	Sam Ehresman Chris Gerber	Woodburn, Ind. Roseville, Ind.
Woodburn, Ind.	150	Benjamin Oyer Eli Oyer Emanuel Becker	Ft. Wayne, Ind. Woodburn, Ind. Ft. Wayne, Ind.
Chicago, Ill.	45	Bishop J. K. Gerig	6518 S. Honore St., Chicago, Ill.
Flanagan, Ill.,*	150	Bishop C. R. Egle B. E. Rediger	Meadows, Ill. Gridley, Ill.
Groveland, Ill.	109	Bishop Ben Rupp Emanuel Rocke Chris Ben Birkey Chris Oyer	Bloomington, Ill. Pekin, Ill. Pekin, Ill. Tremont, Ill.
Sterling, Kans.	48	Bish. J. Schmucker D. N. Zimmerman N. J. Schmucker	Plevna, Kans. Sterling, Kans. Sterling, Kans.
Hickory Co., Mo.	extinct		
Centralia, Mo.	extinct		
Seward Co., Nebr.	extinct		
Elkton, Mich.	extinct		
Zurich, Ont., Can.	extinct		

* Salem (near Gridley)

---

[5] From *Central Conference Year Book* of 1926, p. 38 with additions and changes.

This branch, although spoken of as the Egly Amish by the members of the parent group, calls itself officially the Defenseless Mennonite church. The name is somewhat misleading to those unacquainted with Mennonite history, since "defenselessness" is no more characteristic of this than of other branches of the Mennonite denomination. The name was officially assumed during the Civil War when in negotiating for a deed to the Salem church property at Gridley, this term was hit upon.

At first the Egly people were very strict in their discipline and were more rigid than the Amish in maintaining the old regulations with regard to dress. The prayer head covering, a black, three-cornered veil, and bonnet were originally worn. Later the veil was made larger and longer. Eventually discarded, no prayer head covering is used at present. The regulation collarless cut of coat, as prescribed by some branches, never was worn by the men. They did not wear ties in the early days but a sort of black kerchief around their necks. When the modern style of the tie came in, most of them adopted it, but a few of the older ministers have never worn ties. The holy kiss is in favor but is little observed by the younger generation although it is practiced quite faithfully among the ministers. At first they were quite exclusive and had little religious or social affiliation with the church from which they withdrew. They insisted on a definite "religious experience" and rebaptized all those that could not confess that they had been truly converted at the time of the first baptism, a confession which, of course, under the circumstances few could make.

During recent years, however, a marked change has taken place in the relation of the group to the other Mennonite organizations. The second generation of the Egly branch has assumed a more liberal attitude toward the old church, and the latter, too, has changed decidedly for the better.

The first annual conference was held in 1883 but it was not incorporated until 1908. A split occurred during the last decade of the nineteenth century due to the fact that some insisted upon immersion as the only mode of baptism, taught the filling of the Holy Spirit to be an experience separate from regeneration, and strongly emphasized missionary work.[6] Nearly all of the then existing congregations were divided.

The first missionary work was begun in 1896 when the conference undertook to support a missionary to West Africa. The Congo Inland Mission was incorporated in 1912. In 1898 the Salem Orphanage near Flanagan, Illinois, was founded. The Mennonite Sanitarium Association was organized in 1919 and the Sanitarium of Bloomington is maintained. The Old People's Home at Meadows was dedicated in May, 1923. The Central Conference of Mennonites unites in supporting these four activities.

The Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ coöperate with this branch in the publication of "Zion's Tidings." The Salem Gospel Mission, Chicago, Illinois, established in 1908, is supported solely by the Defenseless Conference. The Brotherhood Aid Association, started in 1918 and controlled by the conference, is patronized by the members of other branches.

The churches in Illinois, the work of the annual conference, and the various conference activities as well as the Missionary Church Association schism, will be taken up in detail in the chapters that follow.

---

[6] See Chap. XLVII, "The Missionary Church Association."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE SALEM CONGREGATION NEAR GRIDLEY[1]

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the Egly movement[2] found its way into the Gridley Prairie congregation through Joseph Rediger, who, at the time, was minister of this church which had been established but a few years before.

The first Mennonite settlers had come to the Gridley Prairie from Tazewell and Woodford counties in 1859 as land could be purchased both from the railroad and from the government at the price of six dollars an acre. Among the first that came were Joseph, John and Jacob Rediger, Joseph Gerig, John Ehresman, Christian Slagle, and others.

Gridley was their nearest railroad town, seven to eight miles southwest from them. There were no roads laid out, but they drove straight across the sections in a "bee-line" so far as the sloughs and ponds permitted. There was only one farm house between them and Gridley and one about two miles north. They hauled their coal, then and for many years afterwards, from the mines near Streator, Illinois, about twenty-five miles north. There was the Toledo, Peoria, & Western Railroad to the south, the Illinois Central on the west and later the Chicago & Alton Railroad on the east.

---

[1] The church is located in the rural district also near Flanagan, Waldo, and Meadows and is referred to by these addresses sometimes.

[2] Material principally from manuscript furnished by C. R. Egle, Elder of the Salem Church, reinforced by interviews with him and D. N. Claudon, Meadows, Ill. Much of the chapter is taken directly from Egle's manuscript.

Most of these settlers had been renters before they came to this section but had enough funds to purchase and start payment on their farms. By hard work and good management they soon prospered and improved their farms, especially by tilling their low lands which to their surprise were the most fertile. The first slough wells gave way to dug ones and later on to drilled wells. A number of others moved into this neighborhood until a large Amish settlement, interspersed with other German people, and some English, was formed. Among the Amish people that settled here are found, besides the aforementioned, the names of Albrecht, Augspurger, Bechler, Beller, Birkey, Claudon, Eigsti, Egle, Farney, Gasche, Hildy, King, Lehmann, Litwiller, Nafziger, Orendorf, Oyer, Raber, Ringenberger, Rocke, Roth, Salzman, Schrock, Smith, Stalter, Stauffer, Steinman, Stuckey, Ulrich, Vercler, Wagler, Wortz, Yordy, Zehr, and Zimmerman. Later Christian Slagle, John Smith and Wagler located there.

The first Amish minister of the Gridley congregation was Jacob Rediger, one of the first settlers; but he soon died. Joseph Rediger, his brother, was put in charge in 1863. Through the testing time of the Civil War, Joseph Rediger came to the conclusion that the experience of a change of heart and true spiritual life in the church was sadly lacking. Hearing at that time of Elder Henry Egly of Indiana and the movement there, he visited that locality and himself had a definite experience of the forgiveness of sin and a change of heart. Later Henry Egly came to Gridley with the result that a number were converted and baptized and others who had had this experience before they were baptized joined them. Those in the new movement testified freely to what they experienced while others objected to a saving knowledge of grace, thinking it boastful to say, "I know my sins are forgiven, and I am saved." Some ministers from the East, one of them John K. Yoder, were called to settle the difficulty and partly succeeded. However, the split became permanent. This new body of members first had their services in their homes every Sunday and during the winter also meetings on week days and evenings.

Joseph Rediger and also Henry Egly often said afterward that had they not received so much opposition concerning the spiritual life and had they themselves been riper in experience and exercised more forbearance with the brethren, the outcome might have been different.

The first church was built in 1875, on the same location where the present church now stands, in Waldo Township, Livingston County, Illinois, on ground donated by John Ehresman. No deed was made until July 23, 1898, after a small tract of land was added to it, by purchase from the John Ehresman family. This land consists of five acres and 44 rods and was purchased for $301.75. At this time the name Salem Defenseless Mennonite Church was adopted as the official title. The name Salem was taken from the Bible and means City of Peace. This term has become a favorite designation for various Defenseless Conference activities. The new church was built in 1893 at a cost of $2,886.00 and is forty by sixty feet by eighteen feet high with an annex twenty-eight by twenty-eight feet. Much of the labor was donated, reducing the cost materially. This building seats about 300 persons. In 1886 a house was built for Sister Menke, who was then taking care of the church-house. This building cost $150.00 and was enlarged in 1904 for a parsonage for C. R. Egle at a cost of $350.00 for remodeling the house and putting up a small barn. There is also a good, deep-drilled, inexhaustible well on the premises, and sheds for vehicles.

The first burying ground was started on the Joseph Rediger farm one half mile east of the church, where four people are buried: His brother Jacob, Fanny, his first wife, her mother, and Mrs. Esterly, his sister. Later the Waldo Cemetery was opened one half mile west of the church and one half mile south of the Amish Mennonite church. Both churches now use this as their burying ground. However the Pike Cemetery several miles east of the church and the Nebraska Township Cemetery several miles north are used in some cases.

As stated already the first minister of this church was Joseph Rediger who was first ordained to the ministry in the Amish Mennonite Church in 1863. After the new church was started Joseph Rediger's brother, John Rediger, was elected to assist him. The first deacon was Christian King, who was later elected to the ministry along with C. R. Egle in 1883. At this time two deacons, namely, Nichols B. Stuckey and Peter Ehresman, were ordained. As the office is held for life, both served to the end of their lives. Ehresman died in 1893 and Stuckey in 1913. John Slagle and P. P. Oyer were elected to the office of deacon. After they had moved to other locations, D. N. Claudon and Joseph M. Gerig were elected in 1915. The former has moved to Valpariso, Indiana and the latter to Woodburn, Indiana. A. C. Zimmerman and Christian Gerig have since been elected to serve as deacons. Christian Rediger and Eli J. Oyer were elected to the ministry in 1915. Because the former moved to Marion, Indiana and the latter to Woodburn, Indiana, Benjamin E. Rediger was elected to the ministry in 1920.

The first trustees to whom the deed was made were Ben Roth, B. K. Slagle, C. Litwiller, Joseph Oyer, D. N. Claudon and Joseph Ulrich. On March 25, 1900, the following three brethren were elected as trustees for three, two and one year respectively: Ben Roth, P. P. Ehresman and Joseph Oyer. The following brethren have served since that time as trustees: Ben Roth, P. P. Ehresman, Joseph Oyer, Dan Roth, Samuel Litwiller, David Gerig,

L. C. Zimmerman, A. C. Zimmerman and J. E. Ehresman. The money for the special needs, as relief for the poor, Orphans' Home, and Home and Foreign Missions, is taken by subscription and free-will offerings. The expenses for the upkeep of the local church are met by assessment.

On Saturday, March 10, 1903, there was a business meeting to consider the building of a schoolhouse for the teaching of German and religious training for the children. It was then decided, by as many as were present, that a new church be built and that the old church building should be used as a schoolhouse. There was another meeting the following Monday when more of the members were present, and an estimate of $2,000.00 was made for the new church, of which $1,545.00 was subscribed before the close of the meeting. The old house was then moved about six rods west and the building erected at the old place. The old church was used for services until the new one was completed and afterwards for a number of years was used as a schoolhouse with D. N. Claudon as teacher and C. R. Egle as Bible instructor. It was also used for prayer meetings and as a kitchen and dining hall at conference times. Eventually the interest in the German school was lost. Then the main part of the building was torn down and moved to the Orphanage near Flanagan, Illinois. The lumber was used for various purposes, part of it in construction of a quarantine ward for contagious diseases, which is still standing. The part of the building left standing on the church ground was used for a time by C. R. Egle as a printing office.

From the beginning the church services were conducted with singing and testimony for all the members and preaching by the minister or by the deacons in the absence of the ministers, and sometimes in their presence. Special prayer meetings and testimony meetings were also held.

At first the German was used altogether, but later English singing and preaching were introduced. For some years one of the brethren spoke in German and one in English at every meeting. For years services have been conducted twice on Sundays, and also prayer meetings every Wednesday evening. Sometimes prayer meetings were conducted on other evenings. At first Sunday school was held in the afternoon. The first and the second church houses were built with a kitchen and dining room attached so the members could stay all day, the different families changing off in providing the meal which consisted of bread and butter, and coffee and syrup or apple-butter.

The church membership was gained by preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sin as a personal, definite experience. This was generally expressed first in regular and special meetings by the convert rising to his feet sometimes during the sermon and asking the church, mostly with tears, for their prayers; asking forgiveness of parents and friends; making wrongs right; and holding on in prayer until he received, through faith in Jesus' atoning blood, the evidence that his sins were forgiven. Later on an opportunity was given at the close of the message for those that wanted to be saved and requested that the children of God pray for them, to raise their hands; and later on, also, to come forward. Henry Egly, Linn Grove, Indiana, John Detsh, Archbold, Ohio, later on Joseph Egly, and C. G. Egly, Geneva, Indiana, John Harms, Hillsboro, Kansas, John A. Sprunger, Chicago, Illinois, C. R. Egle from the local church and more recently J. K. Gerig, Woodburn, Indiana (who is now engaged in evangelistic work), Jacob Somney, Bluffton, Ohio, Elmer Klopfenstein, Archbold, Ohio, G. P. Schultz, Chicago, D. G. Schultz, Marion, South Dakota, and B. E. Rediger of the local church held successful revivals during which sinners (sometimes as many as thirty and forty) were converted to God, backsliders reclaimed, and children of God led into the deeper life. There was no opposition to evangelistic services in the church after the split from the old body. It is believed to be the most effective method of winning converts.

After souls are saved and have the evidence or witness of the Spirit of God to their spirit that they are children of God, they are expected to witness to this in testimony meeting before the church. Before baptism converts are brought before an examining committee which has a personal talk individually, then instructs them collectively in the way of salvation and the doctrines of the church. In recent years the converts are secured at a much younger age than formerly. A person is considered a church member as soon as he is baptized. After baptism the elder receives the convert with hand and kiss into full church membership. Membership can be discontinued by asking for a letter of dismissal or a letter of recommendation to another church of like faith. Members are put out of the church either for a "death sin" as described in I Cor. 5: 9-11, or for marrying an unconverted person. The church membership at the present time (May, 1925) is, 20 members under 15 years of age, 62 young people, 50 middle aged, and 58 old people, a total of 190. The largest membership the church has had was in 1905 before some members moved away to Missouri, Indiana and Ohio. The church has had at different times Bible lectures and readings, and also has conducted Bible studies in connection with weekly prayer meetings. They are considered a wonderful help to the deepening of the spiritual life and the establishing of the doctrines of the church.

The first Sunday schools in the community were started in the years 1870-74 in three schoolhouses, one in the Albrecht Schoolhouse in Waldo Township, one in the Weltner Schoolhouse, now called the Pfeffinger School in the south end of Waldo Township, and one in Pike Township. As these schools were independent of the church they met with much opposition. Their purpose not being fully understood, they did not continue long. The first Sunday school in the church, begun in 1880, was from the first accepted by the whole congregation without opposition. N. B. Stuckey was the first Superintendent, holding this office several years and being succeeded by D. N. Claudon who officiated for ten years. Afterward the following brethren held the office: E. M. Slagle, David King, C. B. Folkers, J. H. Claudon, E. E. Zimmerman, J. W. Litwiller, B. E. Rediger, J. H. Zimmerman, J. H. Klassen, George Egle, Aaron King, and others. All the classes were conducted in German during the first years. From the beginning the *Jubeltoene* song book was used. The Bible was used as a text book for the first few years. The lessons were selected by the ministers and the superintendent. The smaller children used a special A B C book in German and the next classes a Bible History, both of which were published by the Mennonite Publishing House of Elkhart, Indiana. Sunday school attendance reward cards were given to the children. They were taught to memorize verses of the Bible. Later on the Sunday school quarterlies of the Mennonite Publishing House of Scottdale, Pennsylvania, were used and are still used for the two German classes. At present the English classes are using the Bethel Series of Quarterlies issued by the Bethel Publishing Company of Elkhart, Indiana. Sunday school and church used *Evangeliums Lieder* as the last German song book. The singing, both in the Sunday school and in the church, is now conducted in English. Several different English song books have been used, among which are the following: *Gospel Hymns, Pentecostal Hymns,* and *Tabernacle Hymns* in use at the present time. Singing classes were conducted by John Hildy, C. R.

Egle, D. N. Claudon, Monroe Lantz, E. E. Rupp and J. P. Barkman. Some others assisted in this work. The early singing was good with all parts, although no musical instruments were used. Later on various other books were used in the classes. At first only congregational singing was done, but afterward duets, quartettes, choruses, and cantatas were introduced. These are used only on special occasions such as funerals, Young People's Meetings, Programs, Christmas, Easter, Conferences, Sunday School Conventions and Revival meetings. For years the church had no musical instruments. They were not allowed in the home or in the church, but later they came to be used in the homes and then they were also admitted into the church. A vote was taken and carried for an organ and then for a piano.

The church has never had a Cradle Roll or Home Department in the Sunday school. For many years, the Primary department has made use of the Picture Rolls, Picture Cards, Sunday school papers, and blackboards. They have no teachers' training class, Vacation Bible School, or week day school for Bible instruction. Some years ago the church had a German School with special Bible Instruction.

The Sunday school offerings are taken for various purposes, such as Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Orphanage, Old People's Home, Famine Sufferers, Relief, Publication, Charity, besides Sunday school supplies which offerings amount to from $8.00 to $20.00 a Sunday. Some of the classes also support a native teacher or an evangelist in Africa. This Sunday school holds an Annual Sunday School convention with the Salem Orphanage, the Groveland, the Salem Mission, and Brighton mission Sunday schools. The Sunday school takes some part in Township and District Sunday School Conventions.

In the last few years it has also been engaged in Sunday School Extension work. During 1922 two new

Sunday schools were opened in the neighborhood, one at the Pleasant Hill Schoolhouse and the second one at the Gregory Church. The former has been under the direction of August Zimmerman and the latter under B. E. Rediger.[3] Rediger held a revival at this place and also at the Shiloh Methodist Church near Panola, Illinois.

The superintendent, secretary, chorister, pianist, and their assistants are elected with the other officers of the church at the annual business meeting of the congregation. The teachers except for the Primary and Intermediate classes who are elected at the business meeting of the Church, are chosen by the classes themselves.

Almost from the beginning of the church, Sunday evening services were held without opposition, sometimes in private houses, and consisted of singing, prayer, preaching, and testimony. For years the church has had Christian Workers' Band meetings with the young people in charge, but the older people take part also. These meetings are followed by a short address by one of the ministers. These meetings help much in Christian experience and development of the various gifts in singing, speaking and the knowledge of the Bible. They correspond to the Young People's Meeting and Senior Christian Endeavor of other churches. Junior and Intermediate Christian Endeavor have been added.

For a number of years the sisters have had a Sewing Circle which meets about every two weeks. At present there is one at Flanagan, and one in Meadows, Illinois. The sisters have their president and treasurer who are elected annually. They make garments, quilts, comforters, spreads, etc., for the poor, the Orphanage, the Hospital, Old People's Home, and Home and Foreign Missions.

From the beginning of the church the conduct of the young people was very exemplary. They came together to sing, had testimony, Bible reading and prayer, without parties, games or such like. There was little courtship. When a young brother thought it time to get married he sought the Lord in prayer for guidance to show him what sister he should choose as a life companion, also praying that the Lord might reveal this desire to the sister. After believing that the Lord showed him the particular sister and consulting with his parents about it, he generally sent the minister or deacon to the parents of the sister to ask them if they, and especially the sister, had anything from the Lord concerning the matter. In most cases it was successful. In the last few years the social life and ways of courtship have taken a decided change; not for the better but for the detriment to the deeper spiritual life.

---

[3] Defenseless Mennonite Conference Report 1922-1923 p. 39.

The matters of dress have also changed considerably. Years ago all the sisters wore the bonnet, very plain clothes, and the veil as a head covering in private prayer and in public meetings. No ornaments of gold or silver were worn. The men wore plain clothes but of no special cut, and generally wore mostly some form of beard, but no mustache. The church stood against the use of tobacco and soon also against frequenting the saloon and the use of strong drink. But there were always some backsliders that fell into these habits for a time.

The local church attitude is friendly and brotherly towards other denominations in the community, especially toward the Mennonite churches of other conferences, the members attending the funerals and other special meetings, and these reciprocating. The church elects at its annual business meeting a solicitor for the church paper, also a correspondent to report local items to the church paper, and they are quite faithful in discharging their duties.

The church has a Sunday school circulating library in coöperation with the other churches in Illinois. Several hundred books were bought by a committee elected by the

Annual Sunday School Convention. Each Sunday school has its librarian. The library is not patronized as much as it should be.

The early settlers sadly neglected the education of their children so that many of them could not use the English language very well and usually got no farther than the fifth grade in school, if that far. In the winter time a German teacher was employed so that they got a better German education with a knowledge of the Bible. Originally very few attended high school, but at the present time a large per cent are in school and a few are teaching in the grades. The contact with the world through the high school has brought and still brings its problems. The attitude was and is still rather passive to higher education or college training, but some of the members have attended Goshen and Bluffton Colleges and a few have attended the Moody Bible Institute and the Fort Wayne Bible Training Schools. Marion (Indiana) College, a Methodist school, is coming into favor. Financial support has been given to Bluffton College by individual members, also to Witmarsum Seminary. Approximately $1000.00 has been donated to these schools, but they are not in favor with the local church as it is suspicious of their theology and methods.

Communion is observed usually quarterly. First an address is given on the washing of the saints' feet, after which the ladies seek private quarters for this service, and the men wash each other's feet in the main part of the church. Then an address is given by the pastor or elder on the sacredness of the communion service. The members stand and are led in prayer by the Elder after which the bread and wine is presented to them individually. Years ago, there was always a meeting of the members before communion service at which time each member was asked to give a reason for his hope of eternal life, but this practice has been discontinued.

Special services are held on Christmas and Easter days. Programs are usually given by the children and the young people. Children's day is also observed. No social gatherings have been held in this church.

The church is a charter member of the conference and is still in good standing; in fact it is regarded as one of the leading churches. Alvin E. Stevenson, one of the pioneer missionaries who died on the field, was a local member. Other religious workers from this church were William Egle, now pastor of the Missionary church at Berne, Indiana; E. M. Slagle, now pastor and elder of the Defenseless Mennonite Church at Archbold, Ohio; E. J. Oyer, now pastor of the church at Woodburn, Indiana; C. E. Rediger, secretary and registrar at Marion College, Marion, Indiana; B. E. Rediger, evangelist and minister of the local church; John Slagle, deacon at Pioneer, Ohio; D. N. Claudon, deacon of the local church; J. M. Gerig, now at Woodburn, Indiana; A. C. Zimmerman, deacon in the local church; Christian Gerig, deacon in the local church. Julia Oyer, now married and living in Alabama, was a nurse in America and was in mission work in Africa for some time. C. R. Egle, Benjamin Rupp and D. N. Claudon have been members of the Mission Board. D. N. Claudon was secretary and treasurer for a number of years. C. R. Egle has been secretary and chairman of the Conference. Benjamin Rupp has acted as chairman and D. N. Claudon as conference secretary. Rupp was superintendent of the Salem Orphanage for sixteen years and is at present the superintendent of the Mennonite Sanitarium at Bloomington, Illinois. D. N. Claudon was for a number of years the superintendent of Salem Orphanage and the president of the Mennonite Old People's Home of Meadows, Illinois. J. H. Klassen of the local church was superintendent of this institution for the first two years of its existence. C. R. Egle and D.

N. Claudon were editors of the first German and English conference publications, respectively.

The annual conferences of both the church and the Sunday school have been held in the local church at different times with an attendance of from 500 to 1000 people, with sessions in the forenoon, afternoon and evening with good success. The meetings are usually held in a large tent. Meals are given in a dining tent and are free to all. The housing of conference guests is done in private homes of the community. The local church elects its delegates to the annual conference each year, one for every twenty-five members. The ministers and deacons are delegates by virtue of their office. The Sunday school and Christian Workers' Band do not send delegates to the annual conference.

The attitude of the Salem church in the days of drafting was firm on the doctrine of non-resistance. Nearly all of the boys refused to do noncombatant service in the camps. None, however, were seriously mistreated or sent to federal prisons. Those drafted were Ezra Gerig, Christian Litwiller, George Egle and Aaron Becker. The community was quite hostile for a time toward the Mennonites. The church was painted yellow and a demand was written on the side of the church building that no German should be preached. The hostility, however, has since died out. The church raised about $2,000.00 for relief work, and also sent out some clothing and supplies. No member of the church was sent overseas to do relief work, but some of the members acted on committees for relief work. The effects of the war have not been for the best interests of the church.

Several reasons might be given as to why the church is not larger. First there are three other churches; the Central Conference Mennonite congregations near Flanagan and in Meadows and the one of the Amish Mennonites, all within six miles of the Salem church; second, many of the members have moved to other localities and helped to establish new churches; third, the exclusive spirit manifested by some of the members; and fourth, the lack of missionary zeal to win souls.

Automobiles were introduced in 1909 and nearly every family owns one now. It has helped to increase the attendance to some extent, at least when roads are good.

No special crisis has befallen the Salem church. When the Missionary Church Association was formed, this was the only church of the conference where no division occurred. "The Tongues Movement," which made inroads on some of the other churches of the conference, especially beyond the Mississippi, did not reach the local church. There are clouds overhanging the church at the present time because of a radical Holiness Movement which is being agitated.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE CONGREGATION NEAR GROVELAND

The Defenseless Mennonite Church near Groveland had its beginning from the Wesley City Amish congregation in that locality.[1] The Amish who came to Illinois were composed of colonists who had emigrated directly from Europe, principally from Alsace, Lorraine, Bavaria and Hesse Darmstadt. The first group, composed of young men and women, mostly unmarried, came from Alsace in the spring of 1831. They landed on the eastern coast, crossed Pennsylvania, came down the Ohio river, then up the Mississippi and the Illinois rivers to Fort Clark, now Peoria. A few miles southward from this town, near Wesley City, they selected their first homes. In this little company of pioneers were David Schertz, the miller, his father; Christian Roggy, his three daughters; Joseph Rusche, his two sisters; Jacob Auer and Peter Beck. The settlement gradually extended so that the majority of the settlers were near the Partridge Creek where the first Amish congregation was organized in 1833. The services were held in private houses, alternately at the different centers. It was not an uncommon thing for members to drive fifteen or twenty miles.

---

[1] Material chiefly from interviews and correspondence with Benjamin Birkey, Pekin, Illinois, C. R. Egle, Meadows, Illinois and E. E. Zimmerman, Groveland, Illinois. The data on this church is woefully lacking because those who lived in the early history have died and the present leadership does not have the facts. This church passed through practically the same development in form of service, use of German language, Sunday school work, revival meetings, and other activities, as did the Salem congregation. Therefore it is unnecessary to elaborate as fully as in the preceding chapter for the repetition would become tiresome. In regard to the Wesley City Amish Congregation see Chap. XXII and Book I, Chaps. VIII, X.

By 1833 to the Wesley City colony were added Peter Guth, John Sweitzer, and Joseph Sommers. Some of the later settlers first took up residence in Butler County, Ohio, before they finally appeared in Illinois. In the beginning the various settlements formed one congregation, but those in the vicinity of Wesley City were given a separate organization about 1837. This congregation, for which Michael Moseman was ordained, became known as the "Busche Gemein."[2]

Michael Moseman was born in Lorraine about 1820,[3] and emigrated to New York in 1831. In 1834 he arrived at the Wesley City settlement, by way of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Butler County, Ohio. Little is known concerning his life. He may have been the first Amish minister to be ordained to the ministry in the state. A few years later, perhaps about 1840, he was ordained to the office of bishop. He was considered a good man with considerable zeal for the cause and a desire for the stimulation of the church, but he was only fair in pulpit power. He served his church faithfully until his death in 1898.

After Egly began to advocate a reform of church life, Moseman fellowshipped with him. In 1868 he, Nicholas Roth the minister under him, and the most of his congregation, as well as some from the Dillon Creek congregation, definitely allied themselves with the Egly movement. As an Amish church, the Wesley City congregation was older than the Gridley Prairie; but as a Defenseless Conference church, it came into being later than the Salem congregation. The few that remained of the Wesley City Amish congregation, being unable to maintain a separate church, identified themselves with neighboring congregations. Moseman became quite active in the new body. Peter Hochstettler who had come to America in 1849 was ordained to the ministry in the seventies. Almost until his death in 1924, he served his church and the conference devotedly, a period of over fifty years. John Detsh, an active young minister who came from Fulton County, Ohio, was ordained as bishop the same time as Hochstettler, probably in the eighties. Detsh was chosen as traveling evangelist. He died in Kansas while still a young man. Andrew Roth was one of the early deacons. Benjamin Birkey and Joseph Rediger were both chosen as ministers at the same time in the year 1888. Joseph Rediger later moved to Milford, Nebraska where he served the Defenseless Mennonite congregation at that place for a number of years. Joseph Springer of Hopedale also was minister of the early church. Then later, Moses D. Ropp and Christian Oyer were chosen to the ministry, the latter about 1901. The above four brethren all served at the same time for a while.

---

[2] Smith, *Mennonite Year Book and Directory,* 1907, p. 20.

[3] This date may be wrong as much as ten years.

In the year 1920 Amos Oyer became the first salaried minister to serve the church. He served nearly three years. Benjamin Rupp was elected to serve as elder or bishop for the church after Peter Hochstettler had retired on account of age. At present Emanuel Rocke, Pekin, Illinois, serves the congregation as pastor; Benjamin Rupp, though at Bloomington Sanitarium, still is elder; Benjamin Birkey and Christian Oyer are ministers; and Benjamin Roth and Daniel Ackerman are deacons.

The church-house, with a capacity of over 200, was built in 1878, one half mile east of Groveland. For the site of the church building and the financial support much credit is due to Andrew Birkey, Morton, Illinois, and Joseph Schertz, East Peoria, Illinois, but all the people were seemingly in favor of erecting a church building. Various sites were contemplated, one at Pleasant Hill a few miles northwest of Morton, and another in Cleveland's grove, west of Morton. John Ackerman donated the acre of land east of Groveland which was accepted as the site. The building committee was composed of Jacob Hochstettler, Peter Wagler, and Andrew Roth. Chris Farney and Joe Stuckey were two of the carpenters who helped in the erection of the building. John Miller and Lena Ackerman were the first couple to be married at the church. They later moved to Milford, Nebraska. There were sheds for housing horses and buggies. More sheds were added in 1895 and the church was remodelled in 1914 at an expense of $2,278.62.

Christian Wagler donated a half acre of land joining the church property which is used as a burying ground. Though it is not chartered, the trustees of the church are responsible for its upkeep. A number of non-members are buried in it especially from the Missionary Church, which assists in keeping it up. The first person buried in the church cemetery was Gideon Wagler.

The church services were at first held in the morning and afternoon, the sermon in the forenoon and Sunday school in the afternoon. Later, both Sunday School and church services were held only in the forenoon of Sunday. Then, on Sunday afternoons Peter Hochstettler and Moses Ropp held services at such places as East Peoria, Pleasant Hill, Hopedale, and Mackinaw, Illinois.

Communion is held at various periods, not always a specified date being set for it. Feet-washing is part of the communion service and precedes the bread and wine ceremony. Usually the church has a series of revival services or Bible lectures annually in the fall. Converts are younger in many cases than formerly. Membership is discontinued for disobedience to church rules.

The Sunday School, with the favor of the church, was started about 1880. It was promoted by Andrew Roth who became the first superintendent. Other superintendents have been Benjamin Birkey, Daniel Hochstettler, Peter Schnur, Michael Ramseyer, Daniel Staker, Frank Diemer, J. B. Hochstettler, Emanuel Rocke, E. E. Zimmerman, Amos Springer and Enoch Zimmerman. Originally all the classes were in German. The Bible was the sole text book for the school. Not until about 1895 were quarterlies used. Cards and charts for the little folks and quarterlies for all others are used, but no graded lessons. Papers are given to the younger classes for home reading. In recent years the Cradle Roll and Primary Departments have been added. There has been no teacher training class. Some classes give special support for a missionary or some benevolent cause. The Orphanage at Flanagan, Illinois, the Old People's Home at Meadows, Illinois, and other institutions and worthy causes are aided by the regular offerings. The children have missionary banks in which they deposit money for some missionary cause. These banks are usually opened shortly before the annual conference. Usually the young people give a Christmas Program and sometimes one at Easter, as well as on Children's Day. The present enrollment of the school is over 150. The school joins with the other Defenseless Sunday Schools of the state in holding an annual Sunday School Convention. The Convention's circulating library is used to some extent. The Defenseless Mennonite, the Missionary and the Evangelical churches at Groveland coöperate in holding an annual Township Convention under the State Sunday School Association. This is usually alternated although in recent years it has been held in the Evangelical tabernacle on account of its larger seating capacity.

As soon as the building was completed services were held on Sunday evenings. At the present time the service is devoted for about three quarters of an hour to one hour to young people's meeting and the remaining time of about one hour to preaching. The first part of the service once called Young People's Meeting is now known by the name of Christian Workers' Band. Both old and young take part in the service. Topics on various subjects are chosen and the program is varied sometimes with essays and special songs.

From the beginning prayer meeting was held in the homes of different members of the congregation on a certain evening of the week.

The present Sunday services are Sunday School in the morning from 9:30 to 10:30, preaching from 10:30 to 11:30, Christian Workers' Band and evening preaching 7:00 during the winter and summer. Prayer meeting is at 7:00 on Wednesday evenings during the winter and 7:30 during the summer.

At the annual meeting the following officers were chosen for the year 1925: Sunday School superintendent, Enoch Zimmerman; assistant Sunday School superintendent, Amos Springer; secretary, Floyd Diemer; assistant secretary, Mary Schmallenberger; treasurer, E. E. Zimmerman; chorister, Frank Diemer; assistant chorister, Amos Springer; pianist, Edna Birkey; assistant pianist, Dorothy Ehresman; superintendent of Cradle Roll, Dorothy Ehresman; primary superintendent, Clara Roth; assistant primary superintendent, Dorothy Ehresman; librarian, Fanny Schmallenberger; president of the Christian Workers' Band, Frank Diemer; vice-president Christian Workers' Band, Enoch Zimmerman; secretary and treasurer Christian Workers' Band, Harry Wagler; delegates for Mennonite Sanitarium Association, Benjamin Roth, Frederick Greiner; delegates for Old People's Home, Moses Roth, J. B. Hochstetler; *Zion's Tidings* solicitor and church correspondent, E. E. Zimmerman; church treasurer, Moses Roth; trustee for three years, B. F. Schmallenberger; and ushers, Willis Irmeger, Elmer Greiner, Harry Wagler.[4] Moses Roth and E. E. Zimmerman have served and are now on the Home and Foreign mission boards, respectively.

---

[4] *Zion's Tidings,* Feb. 1, 1925, p. 6 f.

The church was seriously affected by the Missionary Church Association movement to which it lost a number of its members from 1896-1900. The Missionary Church was built in Groveland by those members who adhered to the leadership of Joseph Ramseyer and separated from the local church. The membership of the Defenseless church at the present time (March, 1926) is slightly over one hundred. Only one member of the local church was drafted during the recent war. He took up non-combatant service. The sisters conduct a sewing circle which meets once each month in the basement of the church. It makes clothing for the orphanage and missions. Its support comes from Sunday School offerings.

Singing, originally in German from books without notes, is in English with up-to-date hymnals, *Pentecostal Hymns No.* 1 and 2 being used for the Sunday morning services and *Tabernacle Hymns No.* 2 for the evening. Some effort has been made to improve the song service by conducting classes. Monroe Lantz has held such classes several times. It had been the custom for a great many years to have organs, and later pianos in the homes. A piano has now taken the place of the organ formerly used in the church service.

In early times education was not common because neither schools nor time was available. Further it was considered unnecessary and in many cases "worldly." At present most of the young people complete the grades and many go to high school. A number, especially women, have been successful teachers. The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, is in favor. At least one of the members graduated from it. Some support is given to Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio.

Joseph Rediger of the Salem congregation helped to stimulate missionary interest in the local church. About fifteen hundred dollars was raised for missions during the year 1925-26. No missionaries have gone out from the church. Assessments are made for the running expenses. None of the present ministers receive a salary.

Joseph Moseman, son of Michael Moseman, donated $2,000 to the church to be used for the care of poor people connected with the church. It was used as such except $600 of it were sent to Meadows, Illinois, to be used in the erection of the Old People's Home. A house and lot was purchased in Groveland about 1900 as a home for poor people. It was sold about 1920. Part of the receipts were sent to Meadows for the building of the Old People's Home and part of it was used in repairing church property.

The local church appoints delegates for the annual conference, one for every twenty-five members not including the ministers and deacons who are delegates by virtue of their office. There are several nominated and then the congregation votes on the required number. The local congregation has been host to the Annual Conference several times. It was a charter member of the conference and, like the Salem Church, has been one of the chief supporters of its work. This and the Salem Church are the only rural congregations in Illinois which are members of the Defenseless conference.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE AND THE ILLINOIS DISTRICT ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION[1]

Although various meetings which included Defenseless ministers and laymen from more than one church had been held before this time the first official conference was in 1883. This meeting, which convened October 14-17, near Berne, Indiana, transacted no business and in fact did not consider itself an authoritative gathering. The sessions were in charge of Henry Egly but no officers were elected. Egly, with the assistance of Joseph Claudon, wrote out a report of it which appears at some length in the secretary's book. The forenoons and afternoons were spent upon doctrinal matters. These were presented in the form of questions which were either assigned to individuals to answer or taken up in open discussion. The evening consisted chiefly of sermons. Those mentioned as taking part in one manner or another were Henry Egly, C. R. Egle, Peter Hochstettler, Hust, Christian King, S. Leip, Joseph Rediger, Daniel Rupp, and Christian Zimmerman. From the score of topics including Sinners and Unrighteousness, Justification, Repentance, Atonement, Baptism, Immersion, Adoption, and Foot-washing, the following may prove of interest:

As to marriage the child of God is to say "not my will but thine be done." Any church member excommunicates himself by marrying an outsider. Upon the swearing of oaths and non-resistance the usual Mennonite attitude was expressed. A person who had a photograph taken of himself was considered as violating the Second Commandment. And for the same reason Bibles with pictures were not to be purchased or used. The holding of such offices as school director or road-master was considered proper if it was not necessary to take oath or violate the other cardinal Mennonite principles. Coöperation with churches of other denominations for holding Sunday school conventions was frowned upon.

---

[1] Material for the most part from the conference secretary's minutes 1883-1925, verified by C. R. Egle, Meadows, Illinois, and E. E. Rupp, Archbold, Ohio.

A decade elapsed before another meeting was called. But beginning in 1895 a conference has been held yearly. Its primary purpose is to transact certain necessary business of the branch. This has increased from year to year as the conference has launched out into greater activities. The conference is organized with a chairman and secretary. Sometimes assistants are also appointed. The routine consists of officers' and committees' reports. Workers from the Sanitarium, Old People's Home, Orphanage, Home and Foreign Missions and other church activities are called upon to give the conditions existing in their fields of labor. The official body of the conference is composed of the ministry and delegates. Each local church elects one delegate for every twenty-five members or fraction thereof. Originally the church houses were large enough to handle this body. But since other features more inspirational and of general interest have also become a part of the annual session, larger numbers have attended. Thus it has become necessary to hold the meetings in a large tent. Meals, free to all, are served in a dining tent. The housing is done in private homes of the community.

The following table lists the annual conferences that have been held thus far:

Annual Conferences of the Defenseless Conference

Place of Meeting Dates Held	Chairman	Secretary	Delegates
Berne, Ind., Oct. 14-17, 1883	Henry Egly	Jos. Claudon	
Groveland, Ill., Dec. 5-11, 1895		C. R. Egle	
Gridley, Ill., Feb. 16, 1896?	Minutes are missing		
Gridley, Ill., Sept. 28, 1897	C. R. Egle	N. B. Stuckey	
Gridley, Ill., Dec. 29, 1898	Peter Hochstettler	C. R. Egle	
Gridley, Ill., Dec. 28, 1899	J. Schmucker	C. R. Egle	
Gridley, Ill., Dec. 27-29, 1900	J. Schmucker	C. R. Egle	
Sterling, Kans., Oct. 18-19, 1901	J. Schmucker	C. R. Egle	
Archbold, Ohio, Oct. 14-15, 1902	J. Schmucker	C. R. Egle	
Groveland, Ill., Oct. 7-8, 1903	J. Schmucker	C. R. Egle	
Berne, Ind., Oct. 18-19, 1904	Ben Rupp	C. R. Egle	
Gridley, Ill., Oct. 9-12, 1905	Ben Rupp	C. R. Egle	
Grabill, Ind., Oct. 4-6, 1906	Ben Rupp	C. R. Egle	
Groveland, Ill., Sept. 23-25, 1907	Ben Rupp	C. R. Egle	
Plevna, Kans., Oct. 8-14, 1908	Ben Rupp	C. R. Egle	
Archbold, Ohio, Aug. 30-Sept. 3, 1909	J. K. Gerig	D. N. Claudon	
Gridley, Ill., Sept. 12-16, 1910	J. K. Gerig	D. N. Claudon	
Berne, Ind., Sept. 5-11, 1911	J. K. Gerig	D. N. Claudon	
Groveland, Ill., Sept. 3-18, 1912	Ben Rupp	D. N. Claudon	
Sterling, Kans., Oct. 9-13, 1913	Ben Rupp	D. N. Claudon	
Bluffton, Ohio, Aug. 27-30, 1914	Ben Rupp	D. N. Claudon	73
Woodburn, Ind., Sept. 9-15, 1915	Ben Rupp	D. N. Claudon	70
Gridley, Ill., Sept. 1-4, 1916	Ben Rupp	D. N. Claudon	
Archbold, Ohio, Aug. 28-Sept. 2, 1917	Ben Rupp	D. N. Claudon	67
Groveland, Ill., Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 1918	E. M. Slagle	D. N. Claudon	86
Grabill, Ind., Sept. 4-6, 1919	E. M. Slagle	D. N. Claudon	73
Pioneer, Ohio, Sept. 2-7, 1920	E. M. Slagle	E. E. Rupp	72
Gridley, Ill., Aug. 31-Sept. 4, 1921	J. K. Gerig	E. E. Rupp	91
Berne, Ind., Aug. 15-20, 1922	J. K. Gerig	E. E. Rupp	82
Woodburn, Ind., Sept. 5-9, 1923	J. K. Gerig	E. E. Rupp	75
Archbold, Ohio, Aug. 27-31, 1924	E. M. Slagle	E. E. Rupp	80
Groveland, Ill., Aug. 25-30, 1925	Eli Lantz	E. E. Rupp	84

The 1895 conference reiterated belief in the cardinal Mennonite doctrines. The greeting with the holy kiss was to be used. The prayer head covering was to be worn by the women.[2] Jewelry and other adornments, secret societies, life and property insurance, worldly amusements, frequenting of saloons, and the use of tobacco were not to be tolerated. If a member felt a call to preach he was to make it known to the elder of his church. If that church should approve he should be permitted to labor there. If successful after a probationary period he could be ordained and sent to another field if there was one.[3] A suggestion was dropped that they bear with one another on the millennial doctrine, which was no doubt beginning to create a disturbance at that time.

---

[2] The prayer head covering was originally a black three cornered veil, later a larger and longer veil and eventually took the form of a cap. The men did not wear ties in the early days but a sort of black kerchief around the neck. When the modern style of the tie came in most of them adopted it, but a few of the older ministers never wore ties. The regulation cut of coat never was used.

The conference of 1897 declared that when one of the church members married a member of another denomination they should choose their future church home and the ceremony should be performed there. In the election of a minister the candidate must receive two-thirds of the votes of his own church. From the fact that a report is given a Foreign Mission Fund must have been inaugurated before this time. In 1896 the conference began to support Matilda Kohm in Africa. C. R. Egle, with Joseph K. Rupp as assistant, was appointed to the new office of traveling evangelist. A resolution was passed to start a German Church paper under the name of *Heils-Bote* with C. R. Egle as editor and Joseph Rediger and Peter Hochstettler as assistants. The following resolution, "We believe in only one water baptism upon repentance and forgiveness of sins as the answer of a good conscience toward God regardless of the mode of baptism," and another concerning the division of the church property reflects the disturbance created by the Missionary Church Association.

---

[3] The present system of election of ministers is given as follows in the *Church Manual,* pp. 42-44, and 55-57.

Candidates for the Ministry. 1. A minister may be called by a vote of the Church, or if there is a brother who feels a call to preach the Gospel, he shall make it known to the pastor of his church. 2. If the minister considers him a proper subject according to I Tim. 3, he shall notify the Elders who at an opportune time shall visit the candidate and will, with the minister in charge, examine the state of grace, moral character, and the nature of his call. 3. If the Elders, upon satisfactory examination, find the candidate in a fit state of grace, a meeting of the church may be called, and with a consent of a three-fourths vote of the church he may be granted a license until the next Annual Conference. 4. At the annual conference a yearly conference license shall be granted such, providing they have been on trial for six months, and have passed an examination satisfactorily on our Confession of Faith and Discipline, with a three-fourths vote of the conference. 5. If the candidate has been accepted according to Section II, Paragraph 4, he may be received on a three years' term of probation, the conference licenses being renewed annually. 6. No probationer shall be ordained until he has completed and passed a written examination on the reading course prescribed by the examining committee, and has given full satisfaction to the church to which he has ministered, and to the examining committee that he is fully in line with our doctrine and discipline, and that he is capable of taking charge of a work, with a three-fourths vote of the conference. 7. A minister having been ordained by another denomination, desiring to join our church, shall labor under the same rules as other applicants according to Chap. IV, Section II, Paragraphs 1-6, and when deemed approved shall be submitted to the conference, who shall then recognize his previous ordination or advise his reordination.

The Conference of 1900 appointed D. N. Claudon, J. A. Oyer, and Benjamin Rupp as a committee on publication. A resolution of the 1901 conference empowered the various church deacons to form an organization to establish a home for enfeebled mission workers and aged and to incorporate the conference if necessary. In 1902 the conference disapproved the formation of a church insurance society. When there was a loss it was to be made known to the ministers and deacons of the different congregations and offerings taken. A whole day of the conference period was to be set aside for discussion of Sunday School problems. At the annual session of 1905 Alma E. Doering made a report on the work in Africa. Mr. C. E. Hulburt presented the cause of the Africa Inland Mission in British East Africa. In order to encourage the young people to more Bible study and education, a committee of C. R. Egle, Benjamin Rupp, D. N. Claudon, J. K. Gerig and J. J. Schlatter was appointed. A committee composed of John Slagle, P. P. Ehresman, and John Rupp was empowered to purchase a tent in which to hold the conference sessions.

The delegate body at the conference in 1906 appointed a committee of three to go to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to confer with the Home council of the Africa Inland Mission regarding the opening of a station. It was resolved at the 1907 conference to send Amos Oyer, Anna Zimmerman and Julia Oyer with Missionary Doering to Africa. At the conference of 1908, it was reported that the Salem Gospel Mission was opened at 249 Root Street, Chicago, Illinois, on June 24, with Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Gerig as superintendent and matron and Mary Rediger and Addelle Lugibill as helpers. A resolution provided that the Home and Foreign Committees, which were heretofore separate, should be united into one board.

The 1909 conference accepted the work of the constitution committee which reported that it had secured, the previous year, incorporation of the body under the laws of the State of Illinois, under the name, "Conference of Defenseless Mennonites of North America." A resolution provided that the conference help support "The Happy Hour Mission," which was a coöperative activity of the several Mennonite branches doing mission work in Chicago. The 1910 conference adopted the idea of district superintendents and the following were appointed: J. C. Rediger, California, Oregon, Nebraska; Jacob Schmucker, Kansas, Oklahoma; Benjamin Birkey, Illinois; Eli Lantz, Indiana, Michigan; and Daniel Rupp, Ohio. It was resolved to close the mission work in British East Africa and seek for a more needy field. Alma E. Doering, already well known for her missionary work in Africa was present. A committee composed of Eli Lantz, Silas Miller and D. K. Zimmerman was elected to arrange for Bible conferences in the churches. This however does not seem to have been put into effect.

The 1911 conference enacted the following: 1. Resolved that we enlarge the *Zion's Call.* 2. Resolved that we take up free-will offerings for the workers of the Orphanage, two-thirds of the offering to be for Brother and Sister Rupp, one-third for workers who have been in the Orphanage five years or longer. 3. Resolved that we accept Brother and Sister Stevenson as members of the church and mission workers for Africa. 4. Resolved that we allow Amos Oyer two years' leave of absence to complete a course of Bible Study, during which time he shall be given a home at the Salem Gospel Mission. 5. Resolved that we accept Walter Herr, Addelle Lugibill and Sarah Kroeker as missionary candidates. 6. Resolved that each church organize a young people's meeting.

The returned missionaries Amos Oyer, Julia Oyer, and Anna E. Zimmerman gave reports on conditions in Africa and the status of mission work there.

The annual conference held in 1912 authorized the sale of the former Salem Gospel Mission building and the purchase of the brick building at 248 Root Street, Chicago. A committee consisting of J. K. Gerig, S. J. Miller, E. M. Slagle, E. E. Rupp and D. N. Claudon was appointed to have charge of the Christian Workers' Band whose duty was likely to furnish suggestive subjects and topics for the Sunday evening meetings; at least that is the duty that eventually devolved upon this committee. In 1913 the conference decided to adopt as its official Engish organ the *Zion's Call,* which had been published by he Salem Orphanage. E. E. Rupp and Benjamin Rupp vere to act as editors. In 1914 the conference report howed that the offerings for the different branches of nission work amounted to $1,022.45. A doctrinal statenent urged the use of the prayer head covering.

The 1916 conference authorized the sale of the farm n Alberta, Canada, which had been donated the year previous for missionary work. Extension work was undertaken by appointing a committee: Moses Roth, J. M. Gerig, E. M. Slagle, D. M. Zimmerman, D. N. Claudon. The conference officers were appointed as delegates to the conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ which was to convene at Elkhart in March, 1917.

In 1917 the following was enacted: 1. Resolved that the conference stands on record that according to the Word of God, as we understand it, our members should have no part in military service under the military arm of the government, and that we adopt a resolution passed by the General Conference of American Mennonites at Goshen, Indiana on August 29, 1917. 2. Resolved that a committee of three brethren be appointed to meet with the General Conference then in session at Goshen, Indiana, this committee to be a standing committee on military affairs for the coming year. 3. Resolved that the conference officers be sent as delegates to the conference of Mennonite Brethren in Christ which convenes March 14, 1918 at Potsdam, Ohio. 4. Resolved that we extend our invitation to the Mennonite Brethren of North America to coöperate with us in our Foreign Mission work. 5. Resolved that Aaron Sauder, Moses Roth, and D. N. Claudon be appointed as a committee to investigate the forming of a Mutual Benefit Protective Association for the Brotherhood. 6. Resolved that the publication of *Heils-Bote* be discontinued. 7. Resolved that a committee of five be appointed by the chairman to take steps to establish an Old People's Home.

A small book of 64 pages called *Church Manual,* was printed in 1917 by the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Publishing House of Chicago. It contained the Confession o Faith, Rules and Disciplines of the Defenseless Mennonit Church as revised and adopted at the conference of tha year.

Resolutions of the 1918 conference provided for the disposal of church property at Milford, Nebraska, and Centralia, Missouri. A committee of three brethren was appointed to look after camp visitation and other affairs connected with military problems. It was voted that the Church Aid Association be organized to which task Aaron Sauder, D. N. Claudon and Moses Roth were assigned, and each local church was to appoint a director to coöperate with this committee. *Zion's Call* was made a semi-monthly paper. An allowance of $500.00 per year was made to support Miss Dorothy Goodman in the Jewish Work to be begun in Chicago by the General Conference of Mennonites.

At the conference of 1919, *Zion's Call* reported 577 subscribers. The Brotherhood Aid Association had issued 159 policies. Permission was given to change the by-laws so that members of other branches of the nonresistant faith could take insurance in this association. Encouragement was given to the establishment of the hospital at Bloomington, and the Old People's Home for which the congregations were asked to elect delegates to the annual meetings. A Sunday School Extension Board was to be organized by electing a delegate from each local church.

The conference of 1920 seems to have contained much of an inspirational nature. David Zimmerman gave a sermon, "The Real Touch." Levi Zehr welcomed the delegates and visitors. E. M. Slagle gave an address. Jacob Schmucker spoke on "Prayer and Its Results," and C. R. Egle on "Future Ministry of the Church." Following this address the subject of home missions was taken up. The local church was briefly discussed by D. N. Claudon. L. B. Haigh then gave some interesting figures showing the progress of the Congo Mission work. Speeches were then given by Amos Oyer and J. A. Huffman. G. P.

Schultz, formerly superintendent of the Happy Hour Mission from 1908 to 1914, and now superintendent of the Brighton Mission of Chicago, being present was appointed as the traveling evangelist. The conference favored the consolidation of their paper, the *Zion's Call,* with *Good Tidings,* the organ of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ. An educational committee was appointed to investigate the present and future needs of a Bible Training School and advise the young people accordingly. J. K. Gerig was authorized to act for the conference in behalf of the Mennonites of Russia seeking a home in America.

At the 1921 conference the Mennonite Brethren in Christ who happened to be present were invited to attend the delegate sessions. The conference seemed to favor the suggestion from the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ (Russian) for unification. Delegates were appointed to represent the conference at a session of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (Brenneman) at Goshen, Indiana where consolidation of their mutual foreign missionary work was to be considered. The joining of farmers' organizations was frowned upon. The following schools were approved: for Bible training knowledge—the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois, and the Fort Wayne Bible Training School, Fort Wayne, Indiana; for college training—Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, and Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois; and for Seminary work the Witmarsum Theological Seminary, Bluffton, Ohio. A committee of three was appointed by the 1923 conference on the Mennonite Relief Commission. It was resolved that two delegates from the Central Conference of Mennonites and two delegates from the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ Conference be elected annually by said conferences to become members of the Salem Orphanage Association. The following resolution was passed "That we give Bro. H. F. Weber our moral support in the writing of our Mennonite history and request that he confer with the Publication Board in the make up of its material."

In 1924, coöperating committees were appointed to attend both the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ (Russian) and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (Brenneman) conferences. At the 1925 conference it was decided that the Mission work be carried on by two separate boards—Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board—instead of the one general board. In connection with the annual conference the ministerial meeting was to be held as determined by the program committee. It was decided that for the ensuing conference year each church endeavor to hold a local convention and that the annual convention in connection with the business conference be omitted.

Since the conference has grown in its work as shown by the abundance of detail in the printed reports it is impossible to give an adequate idea of the spirit and activity of the sessions in the brief space allowed here.

The Illinois District Annual Sunday School Convention

Sunday Schools had sprung up among the Defenseless Mennonites about 1880 and were included as part of the regular activities. The Annual Conference of 1902 set aside a whole day for the discussion of Sunday School problems. The conference also created a Sunday School extension department, now part of the work of the Home Mission Board, which was to promote Sunday Schools in neglected communities. The schools at Viberg with helpers from the Grabill, Indiana, congregation; at Paulding with helpers from the Woodburn, Indiana, Congregation; and at Pleasant Hill and Gregory, both with workers from the Salem congregation near Gridley, have been established.

Two of the five conference districts, Indiana-Ohio and Illinois, conceived the idea of holding Sunday School conventions. These districts, comprising a smaller area, give many an opportunity to attend who, on account of distance, would find it inconvenient to go to the Annual Conference. Besides, these conventions could put more time upon discussion and inspirational addresses than the Annual Conference which had to devote much of its time to business.

The first Sunday School Convention of the Defenseless Mennonites of Illinois was held at the Salem church near Gridley, Illinois, June 25, 1915. The convention was in charge of J. K. Gerig, chairman and E. E. Zimmerman, secretary. A large number of people attended the program. The churches of Groveland, Gridley and the Chicago missions were represented.

The convention undertakes very little business. It elects its officers, appoints its committees and usually takes up a collection for some cause. A circulating library of several hundred books was purchased by, and is in charge of, its library committee. The local Sunday Schools elect their librarians who draw the books for their schools.

CHAPTER XL

THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY WORK[1]

The first missionary interest in the church was taken in the year 1892 through the instrumentality of John A. Sprunger, at that time in Mission Work in Chicago. The church gave considerable support to his work. Joseph Rediger, elder in the Salem congregation had a warm heart for missions. He was responsible for securing much of the support in 1896 for Mathilde Kohm (later Stevenson) the first foreign missionary.

Mathilde Kohm, born in Germany a Roman Catholic, came to America through her sisters already in this country. They had become members of the German Methodist Church in New York City. She too, being converted, joined the Methodist Church and soon began work as a city missionary. On becoming acquainted with J. A. Sprunger's work, she was baptized by him and ordained as a deaconess. Later she went to the Congo, West Africa, under the Christian Missionary Alliance supported by J. A. Sprunger and the Defenseless Mennonite churches. On her first furlough she was accepted into full church membership by the Salem congregation near Gridley, Illinois, and from this time was fully supported by the Conference. The Defenseless Conference on December 29, 1898, held at the Salem Church, passed the following resolution, "Resolved to further support Sister Mathilde Kohm as missionary to the Congo."[2]

---

[1] Much of this information upon the early mission work is from C. R. Egle, Meadows, Illinois.

[2] Defenseless Conference minutes for December 29, 1898, p. 17.

When she went to the field the second time in 1900 she was accompanied by Alma E. Doering of Chicago, Illinois, a deaconess and member of the Evangelical Association, who later joined the Defenseless Conference and was supported by it. They worked under the direction of the Swedish Missionary Society. They were quite successful in their efforts.

The conference of 1906 appointed a committee to confer with the Home Council of the Africa Inland Mission regarding the opening of a station.[3] The following year the conference appointed Amos Oyer, Julia Oyer, and Anna E. Zimmerman, all from the Salem congregation, to take up the work with Alma E. Doering in the Africa Inland Mission. Eventually six missionaries were sent out and supported at this station for a time. Emil Sywulka and Marie Schneider (later Mrs. Sywulka) had been added to the above appointees.

As the territory seemed to be congested and claimed by several missionary societies the station was sold to the Africa Inland Mission in 1910 and the missionaries were recalled.

In the meantime the Central Conference of Mennonites had become interested in foreign missionary work. Before 1905 they had helped to support mission work through other Mennonite Boards.

In February, 1905 a meeting of members from both the Defenseless and the Central Conference was held at Meadows, Illinois. Secretary M. S. Steiner of the (old) Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities was present and gave a stirring address on closer coöperation among Mennonites in Missionary work. This left a lasting impression on both conferences and helped to bring coöperation in the future. In October 1905 Doctor C. E. Hurlburt, Superintendent of the East Africa Inland Mission, who was traveling through this country in the interests of missions, gave two addresses at the Central Conference then in session, at Meadows, Illinois. As a result the following April the Central Conference sent out Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Haigh as missionaries to British East Africa.[4] About $2,500.00 was raised to carry on the work. An individual of Washington, Illinois, took it upon himself to support another missionary. Thus there were funds on hand to support four missionaries. Only two were available and actually went to the field.[5] In 1907 the Central Conference sent out Jesse Raynor, L. S. Probst, Laura Collins and Miss Schoenheit. After three years of mission work with the Africa Inland Mission in British East Africa the Central Conference sold out its interests for the same reasons, mentioned above, that caused the Defenseless Conference to sell.

---

[3] Defenseless Conference minutes for October 6, 1906, p. 37

Each of these conferences desiring to continue missionary efforts, a conjoint meeting of both boards was called at Meadows, Illinois, March 22, 1911 to lay plans for their foreign work. It was unanimously agreed that they unite their foreign missionary interests under one board. A committee of eight members was then appointed, four from the Central Conference Board of Missions and four from the Defenseless Mennonite Mission Board, to complete the plans and work of organization. This committee presented its plan to the Defenseless Mennonite Conference held near Berne, Indiana, September, 1911, and to the Central Conference of Mennonites held at Meadows, Illinois, during the same month. It was approved by both bodies, and immediately put into effect.[6] This organization was incorporated under the name of

---

[4] *The Christian Exponent,* Vol. II, No. 12, June 5, 1925, p. 183.

[5] *Gospel Witness,* Vol. II, No. 14, July 4, 1906, p. 216.

[6] From Introduction to Constitution and By-Laws of the Congo Inland Mission Inc. adopted January 23, 1912.

"Congo Inland Mission, Incorporated," with headquarters at Bloomington, Illinois. This name was chosen in preference to one containing the denominational name.

Each conference continues to maintain its own foreign missionary board, but both so far have limited their foreign work to the African field and the management is entirely under the joint body, since increased to six members from each conference, which meets annually at Bloomington, Illinois. The first meeting, however, was held at Meadows, Illinois, January 23, 1912. The board decided to pay jointly all expenses on the field such as the securing of rights, station property, and the transportation of goods from station to station. Each society was given permission to support the missionaries that it saw fit to send out.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence B. Haigh had been sent out[7] by the preliminary committee to investigate the field and attempt to locate new stations. Leaving America April 15, 1911, they stopped in London for several months to take a course in tropical medicine. Arriving in the Belgian Congo September 15, 1911 they first went to Luebo which was the headquarters of the American Presbyterian Mission. Here they received much useful information as well as helpful suggestions from Doctor Morrison who was one of the first pioneers of the district. They investigated along the Kasai River until June, 1912.

Not wishing to take the whole responsibility for the selection of a field they appealed to the Board at home. A. J. Stevenson being sent arrived on the field in April, 1912. He had received his training in the New York Christian Missionary Alliance training school. While there he received a call for mission work in the Congo. In

---

[7] Some of this information has been taken from William B. Weaver's notes in preparation for his "History of the Central Conference of Mennonites."

April, 1896, he had gone to the field working under the Christian Missionary Alliance Board until 1909 when he was compelled to return to America because of his health. About a year later he united with the Defenseless Mennonite Church placing his membership in the Salem Congregation where he was ordained as a minister. After the appeal from Haigh, Stevenson offered himself to the board because his heart was in the work in Africa. Mr. A. D. Campbell, at Boma, Africa was made the legal representative to the English government. Stevenson was appointed chairman of the field committee and Mr. and Mrs. Haigh treasurer and secretary respectively.

Work was begun at the Djoka Punda station, now called Charlesville after Prince Charles of Belgium. This station is about thirteen miles inland from the west coast of Africa in the Belgian Congo and is at the end of navigation on the Kasai River. The territory allotted to the Mennonites for evangelization by the Continuation Committee of the All-Protestant Congo Conference is bounded on the west by the Kamtcha and Kuila Rivers, on the north and east by the Kasai and Luebe Rivers and on the south by the Portuguese Congo line, making a territory approximately two hundred by three hundred and fifty miles.

The people living in this particular territory are the Bantus. They are an intermingling of the Negro and the Hamitic races. The particular tribes in this group of people that have been given to the Congo Inland Mission are the Baluba-Lulua, the Bampendi, the Bacoke and the Bashilele. Up to the present time the Congo Inland Mission has stations manned by white missionaries in only two of these tribes, the Baluba-Lulua and the Bampendi. The Djoka Punda and Kalamba Mukenge stations are in the Baluba-Lulua tribe. After a careful investigation Haigh suggested to the board the establishment of two stations; the one near the village of Djoka Punda and one at Kalamba's village. Both opened in 1912. The government granted the sites selected and the cablegram stating their acceptance was sent to the 1913 Church Conference at South Washington September 18th. These two stations formed the center for missionary work for the Congo Inland Mission Board for the first eight years.

Stevenson who had left his family in America remained on the field until his death February 16, 1913. Mr. and Mrs. Raynor and Miss Collins who had been working for the Central Conference, but were not Mennonites, had resigned to labor in the Africa Inland Mission. Mr. and Mrs. A. Janzen, Miss Sarah Kroeker, and Mr. Walter Herr, four new missionaries, arrived in the Congo January 24, 1913. They were located at the new station called Kalamba only one hundred and fifty miles south but taking into consideration means of travel, which was by foot or hammock, this distance was quite great. These missionaries were Mennonites but did not belong to either of the conferences.

The board had considerable difficulty to discover missionaries. From 1911 to 1915 four of the missionaries, appointed temporarily by Congo Inland Mission Board came from European countries such as Germany and Sweden. Most of the missionaries sent to the field thus far have come from Bible Institutes particularly Moody Institute. A number of them have come from other denominations. Very few volunteers have come from the controlling conferences of Mennonites. This has been true because so few of her young people have trained themselves for work of this kind. The schools must always furnish the missionaries for the foreign fields.

In 1916 Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Barkman and Miss Agnes Sprunger went to the African field and in 1917 Mr. and Mrs. Emil A. Sommer. In 1917 there were eight missionaries on the field, and eighteen native workers who were beginning to be of considerable assistance. The board in its meeting January 4, 1918, at Bloomington, Illinois, considered the opening of the third and fourth mission stations in coöperation with the Mennonite Brethren Church Mission Board.[8] In 1919 three more foreign missionaries were accepted; namely, Mr. and Mrs. William G. Kensinger and Mr. Omar L. Sutton. These three with native workers opened up new territory in five or six places.[9] During this year a new station, called Nyanga, was built about half way between the first two.

In order to show some of the difficulties facing the worker on the field an extract from O. Anderson's letter to *Good Tidings* is given.

"It was soon after the New Year that we started to clear off this little hill on the shore of Kasai. The native women did the first services in that work. We engaged about a dozen men and boys, to bring in every day a certain amount of poles, and sticks, which should be straight although most of them were crooked. So we measured up the place for the house, twenty steps long and eleven wide, the big porch included. Meters and yard-measures are rather scarce here. And we did not have many tools either. One large and one small ax, two big knives, one large and one small saw, a hammer and a small level, also a plane. This shortage of tools was due to the fact that our big order from U. S. A. was delayed, half a year. Nails are not in use, because the natives tie everything together with creepers.

"To put the post down into the ground was the hardest work for me. I had to look after everything and everybody and still the walls are not as straight as they ought to be. Putting on the roof is the biggest work on a Congo house. It takes much grass. By that time we had about thirty men at work. The ceiling is made of native carpets and the walls are whitewashed both inside and outside. At that time we also burnt a few thousand bricks, which was a troublesome job during the rainy season."[10]

---

[8] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. VIII, No. 2, February, 1918, p. 38 f.

[9] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. IX, No. 2, February, 1919, p. 36 f.

In 1920 the Field Committee, consisting of Sutton, Barkman, Janzen and William Kensinger, staked out two new stations in the Bampendi tribe, the one at Nyanga, one hundred and ten miles northwest of Kalamba and about ninety miles southwest of Djoka Punda, and the other, Mukedi, one hundred and ten miles northwest of Nyanga. The station at Nyanga was formally opened in April, 1921, while Mukedi was not opened until 1923. Thus the Congo Inland Mission Board has four stations manned by white missionaries in two out of the four tribes allotted to it. These stations represent different interests in foreign mission work. Djoka Punda is an industrial station and also a transport station. This station serves as the headquarters for the mission work in Africa. The Kalamba station serves as the center of the educational work of the missions while Nyanga and Mukedi are the particularly evangelistic centers.

At the Defenseless Mennonite Conference held at Pioneer, Ohio, September 2-7, 1920, Missionary Haigh reported that the number of outposts had been increased from two, five years ago, to twenty-three at the present time. There were fifty-six members, 91 in the catechumen class, a total Sunday School attendance of 1130 and it was estimated that 1900 people heard the Gospel three times a day in 1919.[11]

As stated before, Rev. and Mrs. Haigh were the first missionaries sent by the Congo Inland Mission Board to the Belgian Congo. To Mr. and Mrs. Haigh must be given the credit for doing the pioneering in foreign mission work in the establishment of the first stations. Their travels through the jungles and forests for miles and miles by hammock and on foot in all kinds of weather conditions and with all kinds of dangers surrounding them demanded a great deal of courage, persistence and physical strength. One of the significant buildings on Djoka or Charlesville station is the brick chapel, erected by Rev. L. B. Haigh in 1920. This building was made possible by money willed to Mrs. Haigh by her mother, a gift of five hundred dollars. The brick for the building was made by the natives; the iron for the roof was ordered from England. The church has a seating capacity of six hundred besides having a room in the back large enough for the holding of prayer meetings and special classes. This building was dedicated the first Sunday in August, 1921. The Haighs returned on their first furlough in 1915 and returned to the Belgian Congo in May, 1916. In 1920 they returned home on their second furlough and moved to Danvers, Illinois. Mr. Haigh became editor of the *Christian Evangel* and pastor of the Danvers Mennonite Church until the latter part of 1923 when they left for Havelock, North Carolina, where they resided for a time. In the Congo Inland Mission Board meeting of September 9, 1926, a resolution was passed to invite Mr. and Mrs. Haigh to return to the Belgian Congo.

---

[10] *Good Tidings,* Vol. II, No. 5, November 15, 1920, p. 2 ff.

[11] Defenseless Conference minutes for September 2-7, 1920.

The nature of the foreign mission work in the first years can well be stated in a report given by Mr. Haigh for the *Evangel* concerning the years 1911 to 1913. He says: "We have temporary houses at each station for three missionaries, a chapel and a store house. At Djoka Punda we are at present building a permanent house which will house three missionaries very comfortably. At each station we have a department where logs are converted into lumber for building purposes by natives under our supervision. We are getting material ready for permanent buildings which will take the place of the small grass and mud houses which we are living in at present. The evangelistic work of the mission is very encouraging. At each station three evangelistic services are held each week and on Sunday afternoon a Sunday School. At Djoka Punda meetings are held four nights in a week for the purpose of giving Bible instruction. On Wednesday evening we have a prayer meeting for the Christians." Mr. Haigh continually emphasized two things which are of vital importance in foreign missions to-day; first, that there must be industrial, educational, social and religious work done; second, that we must get volunteers from our own congregations and these volunteers must be trained before they are sent to the field.

It is interesting to note how school work was undertaken with the native children. The following extract from Sarah and O. Anderson's letter of November 18, 1920, to *Good Tidings* will be suggestive.

"We ring our first bell at half past eight and then all the boys on the station put down their hoes and knives and come to the storehouse. Then they run and see if they have a little food left in their little cooking pots or tins that they have received from us and if there is a little fish, or some grasshoppers, or ants or worms left, that then quickly goes on the fire and is heated, so that they have 'mbua' their bread here, cooked from 'ciombe' and is very hard (too hard for our stomachs) to digest; but they fill up on that and half an hour later the bell rings again. The bell consists of a piece of iron and a bolt, from which a noise can be made. Then all the children come. But don't think that they are in a hurry. I have never seen anybody in a hurry yet, except when they see some meat swimming on the river. All the boys take a plunge in the river first, and they have no towels to dry themselves with and when they come in the water is still dripping from their bodies. For clothing they have only a little shirt, or a rag of some kind, so you see, it doesn't take them long to dress, including big workmen from 35 years down to little babies two or three years old. We surely are in need of kindergartens and nurseries here. The little boys and girls must take their little brothers and sisters with them or they cannot come. It is not very easy for the teacher to have about 50 pupils that try to study and about 10 little ones running about and crying. First we sing a song and you ought to hear them sing. They all like to sing, even the little ones that start to talk, and they sing as well as they can. After prayer and roll-call they go to work. We have a native boy to teach the A. B. C's. You must remember we cannot go to book stores and buy first and second readers. We print the letters on paper with typewriters. The first chart I made on white cloth, so that it would not be torn up so easily. In the beginning I had little hope, but you ought to see them now. They write the letters so nicely that I enjoy the work. The little girls don't smoke, but the boys begin that evil habit when they are still very small and they like to smoke 'Hemp' which dulls their memory, and they have a harder time memorizing. Often these little babies bother the bigger ones in their studies, and so we try to put them to sleep. We have a bench made for them of native mats and I have some old rags and blankets, and so they sleep during the school hours. In this way we continue our school till 11:30. Then we close the school and all march out."[12]

More is given about the school and teaching conditions in a letter to *Zion's Tidings* from J. P. and Matilda Barkman under date of April 12, 1922.

"It is needless to say that we are all happy to have again a decent place to worship in. Also our day-school which was conducted with great difficulty the last two terms, because of not having a suitable place to meet, looked forward with pleasure to the time when we could all gather under a roof.

---

[12] *Good Tidings,* Vol. II, No. 8, February 15, 1921, p. 3 f.

"March 14th, the school met for the first time in our new building. The school, of about three hundred, is divided among seven teachers, four native teachers assisting us, one of whom is a girl who has finished the course which we give in our school. . . . The work on the station is going on as usual. The workmen are carrying sticks for the new girls' house. The boys and girls are busy cutting weeds and planting. Many of the boys have gone home on vacation but will return again when school begins about May 1st.

"Vacation months are always busy ones and this one seems to be especially so as new black-boards will have to be made and old ones repainted, school books repaired, etc."[13]

In 1920 the Misses Alma Diller and Amelia Bertsche went to the field and Mr. Lester Bixel in 1921. In 1923 three missionaries who had been home on furlough returned to the field and eighteen new missionaries went with them. They were Mr. and Mrs. Valentine, Mr. and Mrs. Moser, Mr. and Mrs. Klopfenstine, Mr. and Mrs. Becker, Mr. and Mrs. Langdon, Mrs. Sutton, Miss Alma Doering, Miss Metta Keith, Miss Birky, Miss Theresa Gustafson, Miss Emma Rickert, Miss McMillan and Miss Briggs.

In 1923 the fourth station on the Congo was built about fifty miles from Nyanga in the Bampendi tribes. This was called Mukedi. There were about thirty outstations, with about fifty native teachers, all quite inadequate for the four large tribes. The church membership at the four stations was something over two hundred. There were one hundred students at school at Charlesville, two hundred and twenty at Kalamba, one hundred and eighty at Nyanga, and one hundred and forty at Mukedi.

---

[13] *Zion's Tidings,* Vol. I, No. 24, August 15, 1922, p. 3 f.

During the year 1924 Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Moser, Miss Doering, Miss Sprunger and Miss Birky had a sad experience in the loss of their home and contents when it was struck by lightning. The incident reported by Alma E. Doering in *Zion's Tidings* October 1, 1924 is here given in part.

"Scarcity of men made it impossible to carry my office supplies, and expose them to the duckings I myself received in the rivers when some rotten log serving as a bridge gave way, or the wettings by rain. Letters from teachers had been collected, photographs were being prepared and within two weeks I was to install our office, when, alas! before the walls were finished, we had to flee into it for refuge, while the flames, under a cloudburst of rain, were rapidly devouring our temporary dwelling house. A terrific cyclone, Mr. and Mrs. Moser struck to the ground by lightning, Miss Sprunger dazed by the shock, myself stunned by the great electric blue flame which flashed across my eyes, a native boy writhing under a table with burns and screaming frantically, Mr. Moser paralyzed right under the burning grass roof, and Miss Birky only, apparently unscathed, tells the story of frustrated plans. The natives hurried to the rescue, but they thought only of the bulky things; such as the musical instruments they love so much, the machines, clothing and bedding. We were thankful for these things but our entire files, records of donations, our letters, a typewriter, all the language work of nine months, dental and toilet accessories, many shoes, typewriter ribbons and much paper, fountain pens, my watches and eyeglasses, tools, are gone and that in a shopless land with 1000 miles between us and the nearest large though inadequate shopping center at Kinshasa."[14]

The mission had made it the practice to meet in annual conference.

"With the coming of the last party in January, 1923, it was decided to have the Annual Conference at Kalamba, with as many missionaries as possible present. Seventeen missionaries attended this conference from three stations, those at Mukedi not being present.

"The Conference opened March 17, 1923 and closed the 24th, after a week of careful consideration of all phases of missionary activity. The Revised Rules and Bylaws of the Mission were put into effect, thus inaugurating a more democratic form of field government and the budget system of caring for the mission finances. Committees were so arranged as to include members from all departments and stations, thus unifying the work and stimulating the interest of all for the general good of all stations."[15]

The area in charge of the Congo Inland Mission is a territory about equal to Illinois, Indiana and Ohio combined. The Mission is gradually increasing to meet the responsibility of evangelizing this territory. A fifth station is planned for, across the river from Charlesville, one of the present stations. There are now 70 out-stations manned by native evangelists. In 1925 there were 28 missionaries on the field.

"The past year has been a prosperous one in many ways, but also a very hard year in many respects. Owing to the large number of missionaries sent out recently the transportation charges have been enormous both on new equipment sent out, such as printing press, wood working machine, weaving machine, Ford truck, gas engine, Missionary outfits and provisions. Then too the building operations to house these new recruits have virtually kept the treasury exhausted.

---

[14] *Zion's Tidings,* Vol. IV, No. 3, October 1, 1924, p. 3.

[15] *Zion's Tidings,* Vol. III, No. 22, July 15, 1924, p. 4 f.

"Since the work has grown so rapidly by the increasing number of missionaries which necessitates a larger budget, it is evident that our people must take a larger interest in this work to carry it on successfully. Our dear missionaries are pleading for funds while the treasury is exhausted.

"Because of the enlargement of the work the Mission Board has raised the budget from $8,000.00 to $12,000.00 per year, and it may become necessary to again increase this amount, to do justice to the work."[16]

Some one has said that the boys and girls of Africa need Jesus, churches, schools, learn how to work, learn how to establish Christian homes and how to promote the proper kind of civilization. This is the program that the missionaries on the field are attempting to carry out. Perhaps the best idea can be had of the nature of the African work by the description of the work given by Rev. William Kensinger who has lately returned from the field. He says: "We are working among two of the four large tribes of the Bantu people for which we have made ourselves responsible. There are four main stations manned by white missionaries, who in turn have trained approximately sixty native evangelists and teachers who are manning as many out-stations. There are two lines of missionary endeavor which complete a well rounded out work among the natives of Congo land. First, the building of main stations for the purpose of training native Christian workers as evangelists and teachers. Second, the building of out-stations where these evangelists are sent to teach and preach. The work on a main station is divided into six departments: evangelistic, educational, medical, industrial, agricultural, and itinerating."

---

[16] *The Christian Evangel,* April, 1925, p. 80 f.

Through careful study and experience the mission work on the field has become more efficient both in its administrative machinery and also in its financial methods. The government for the field has become more democratic and the financial system more active and economical. Dr. Hollenback, one of the members of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation, who investigated the Mennonite Mission work, particularly the headquarters at Djoka Punda said: "The Mennonite Mission with headquarters at Djoka Punda is working on sound principles and if the Mennonites of America will coöperate, this station, the strategic point at the end of navigation on the Kasai, will prove the gateway to a large missionary endeavor second to none."

CHAPTER XLI

THE SALEM ORPHANAGE NEAR FLANAGAN[1]

The Salem Orphanage for homeless children was founded by the late Mr. and Mrs. Daniel R. King of Flanagan, Illinois, an aged couple, members of the Defenseless Mennonite Church, who had no children of their own, but who were very much interested in the care of poor unfortunate orphans. They took a general interest in all benevolent work and gave liberally to Home and Foreign Missions. Mr. King had been an invalid for many years, lying helpless upon his bed.

After deciding to give their splendid farm of one hundred acres, lying two miles south of Flanagan, Illinois, which had been their home for many years, for the establishment of an orphanage, they chose the first six trustees, namely, N. B. Stuckey, President, D. N. Claudon, Secretary, B. K. Slagle, Treasurer, Joseph Ulrich, John Slagle and Andrew Roth, all members of the Defenseless Conference, to plan and organize the institution.

Steps were taken to incorporate under the Laws of the State of Illinois. A charter was granted December 22, 1896, the name Salem Orphanage legally adopted and a Constitution and By-laws framed by the Salem Orphanage Association. The membership of the Association was composed of one delegate from every twenty-five members of the different congregations. The Board of Directors are chosen from and by this body.

---

[1] Material for this chapter from D. N. Claudon, Meadows, Illinois, by interview, manuscript and his article in *The Christian Exponent,* Vol. II, No. 9, April 24, 1925, p. 135f; minutes of the Salem Orphanage Association which appear in the Defenseless Conference secretary's book; and reports appearing in *Zion's Call and Zion's Tidings.*

It was customary for the Salem Orphanage Association to meet at the time of the Annual Conference as most of the conference delegates were also delegates to the association. Though it had its own officers, its minutes were also recorded in the conference secretary's book. In 1904 the Association passed a resolution that all ministers and deacons have a right to vote on its questions. Its most important task was to appoint the board of directors which at that time numbered three. After the conference was chartered in 1908 it seems that the work of the Association was considered as a regular part of the conference routine. The credit of initiating and getting the orphanage under way belongs to the Defenseless Conference alone. However, it is likely that very early some support came from other Mennonites. The annual conference in 1923 resolved that the Central Conference of Mennonites and the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ Conference each elect two delegates to the Salem Orphanage Association. Thus the Orphanage has grown to be a coöperative activity among three branches of Mennonites.

The Constitution and By-Laws were adopted and the work of building begun in 1898 on the one hundred acre tract. The first building was a brick veneered structure costing about $4,000.00 which amount was donated by the churches of the Conference. This building accommodated about 25 children besides the workers. The Home was formally opened on March 8, 1900, with Benjamin Rupp as Superintendent, Mrs. Rupp as Matron, and the following as helpers: Mary Schmucker, Sarah Short, Sarah Amstutz and Ida Zook.

The work began in a small way with a few boys, but soon the building was too small. An addition, also of brick veneer, two stories high, built in 1904, increased the capacity to 75 children. Since that time there has been erected a two-story concrete block school building in which the children receive a common school education. An electric light plant had been added to furnish light and power for the institution but has been replaced by the more satisfactory public service used at present.

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Rupp were superintendent and matron of the Home for sixteen years of faithful service. About three hundred children passed through the institution during those years. Much relief was given to the hearts of those who had lost husband or wife and were forced to break up their homes.

In the year 1905 a good friend of the institution, Mr. Henry Broad of Flanagan, Illinois, willed a fine farm of one hundred sixty acres which lies within one mile from the Home. For a time it was farmed by the Orphanage but at present is leased out for share rent. This helps considerably in paying for the running expenses of the institution. Mr. Joseph Moseman, East Peoria, Illinois, another friend of the institution, willed the sum of three thousand dollars to the Home. Henry Rabe remembered the institution in his will with a sum of fifteen hundred dollars. Many others have given of their means to support the work.

The annual Conference in 1897 resolved that a monthly paper be edited in the interest of the conference and orphanage under the name of *Heils-Bote.* This was a German paper. But its English companion was begun about the same time under the name, *Zion's Call,* D. N. Claudon, editor. Though it contained general religious and conference material it was published by the Salem Orphanage Association until a conference resolution in 1913 made it the official organ of the Defenseless Mennonites.

Orphans and half-orphans up to the age of ten years are received at the Home, regardless of creed of parents and are kept until eighteen unless suitable Christian homes can be found. When leaving, children are given a complete outfit of clothing, twenty-five dollars in money, and have good homes secured for them.

The children are given a common school education and religious and industrial training. Originally both German and English were taught. Effort is made to make the human side of their lives real. For instance, at the close of the orphanage school, May 26, 1916, the Board of Directors fostered a picnic like those so popular in the public rural schools. The children, workers, and visitors gathered on the spacious lawn on the east side of the main building. After a short program each of the children was served with a large dish of ice cream, cake, banana, and a bottle of soda water.

It is the practice to hold revival meetings, usually annually. After G. P. Schultz had held a week of such meetings in 1924 he published the following appreciation in *Zion's Tidings*:

"I want to say to the donors, that your donations to the Orphanage are spent in a worthy cause. There are very few institutions of this kind that are doing the work that is done in this Orphanage. Many Orphanages are only giving the fatherless and motherless a shelter without a real Christian influence. Salem Orphanage is a real Christian institution. Every one of the Board of Directors is a Christian. The workers in the home are all Christians. This brings all the children in that home under a real Christian influence. Many of these children would have never received a Christian training, if it were not for this institution. The workers are busy from early in the morning till late at night. It indeed is no easy task for the workers, but with the help of the Lord they are going through, no matter what comes. We were very much impressed with the knowledge the children have of the Bible, and the conception of a Christian life, and the many Christian songs they sang. If you want to hear some real heart music go to Salem Orphanage and you will hear it. We never saw a bunch of children that listen so attentively to God's Word as these children did in the services we had with them. All this proves what we have said before, that those children are under a real Christian influence."[2]

In 1923 a Tuesday evening prayer meeting and Bible reading was started while Friday evening was given over to Junior Endeavor. Many of the boys and girls are out in good homes and are doing well, making of themselves useful men and women. A number of them have established good Christian homes of their own.

The annual expense of running the institution is about six thousand dollars which is received by income off the farms and by free-will offerings, besides what is paid in by such as are able to pay for at least a part of the support of their children. The various Ladies' Aid societies have been very helpful in the making of garments, bedding and other sewing for the children and the furnishing of the Home. The surrounding Churches frequently send in food.

During the vacation months the boys are taught to work on the farm and in the garden. Sometimes they help out neighboring farmers. The girls are taught kitchen and the housekeeping work. In order to stimulate interest and pledge funds for the Orphanage, the Annual Conference requested that the superintendent and matron with several of the Orphanage children make a tour of the churches. The party rendered its first program at the Salem Church near Gridley, September 6, 1922. Eight churches in the home community, nine in the east, and twelve in the west were visited. The journey to the east carried them as far as Archbold, Ohio, while the western itinerary extended to Kansas. About $10,000 was raised through these efforts.

---

[2] Extract of G. P. Schultz' letter to *Zion's Tidings,* January 1, 1925, p. 7.

On June 15, 1924 occurred the dedication of the new addition which contains the dining hall for children and workers, also kitchen and laundry rooms in the basement. The second story is the boys' dormitory. The services were held on the lawn on the east side of the main building, using the east porch for the speaker's stand. Seats for about three hundred were arranged on the lawn and a large concourse gathered together so that many had to stand during the program which lasted nearly two hours. Several songs were sung by the orphans and a number of duets and quartettes rendered. Reverend J. D. Hartzler led in the opening prayer. Superintendent D. N. Claudon made a few opening remarks on coöperation and being laborers together with God, in a work of this kind, stating that the cost of the building in round figures would be about $16,000.00 of which $11,000.00 had been given by donations. Reverend George Gundy, of Washington, Illinois, gave a splendid address on "Ready for every good work," which includes every phase of Christian service. Reverend C. F. Derstine could not be present owing to the condition of the roads since it had rained on Saturday night. Benjamin Rupp, of Bloomington, Illinois, former Superintendent of the Orphanage, offered a Dedicatory prayer after having given a brief talk on the progress of the Institution, this having been the third dedication service since the opening of the Institution in 1900. At the close of the program an invitation was given to go through the building and a large number availed themselves of this privilege.[3]

On the following day, Monday, June 16, the first Annual Home Coming was held when many of the boys and girls came back to enjoy the day together. Invitations had been sent out to the workers and children who had at any time in the past been at the Orphanage and a large number were present coming from several different states, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. During the forenoon, friends were arriving, a number having already arrived on Saturday and Sunday, so that by the noon hour 190 in all were present for the picnic dinner which was prepared by the Orphanage and served on the large lawn. At 1:30 P. M. a program was given in which a number of the children took part, some in songs and others in recitations. A special feature of the program was the song "Yes, Jesus loves me," sung by two little orphan girls, one two years of age and the other four, the audience joining in the chorus. Reverend Benjamin Rupp then gave a brief address. Several other brethren made a few remarks. The weather was fine for the occasion, thin clouds hiding the sun and making it pleasant for the outdoor gathering.[4]

---

[3] *Zion's Tidings,* July 1, 1924, Vol. 3, No. 21, p. 7.

The Sunday School of the Orphanage is a member of the Illinois District Sunday School Convention of the Defenseless conference. The convention held its annual session under a large tent on the Orphanage grounds Sunday, June 14, 1925.[5]

The following Monday, June 15, 1925, the Second Annual Home Coming and 25th Anniversary of Salem Orphanage was held, about 200 being present. At 2:00 P. M. a program was rendered out on the east lawn, where chairs and seats had been placed for the occasion. After the singing of "What a friend we have in Jesus," Brother Fliginger, of Groveland, Illinois, read a Scripture lesson and led in prayer. A song was then sung by the Orphans and two recitations given by Robert Evans and Crystal Surface.

The superintendent then made a few remarks on some of the experiences of the past twenty-five years, in the work of the Salem Orphanage, stating that between

---

[4] *Zion's Tidings,* July 1, 1924, Vol. 3, No. 21, p. 7 f.

[5] See Chap. XXXIX.

700 and 800 children had passed through the Home. There were seven deaths in the past twenty-five years in the Home. Seventy-two children are now being cared for, many of whom are under six years of age.

A chorus of all the young men present joined in a song entitled, "Wandering Child, Come Home." Mathilde Stevenson, of Yonkers, New York, and Miss Agnes Olsen, of Chicago, Illinois, gave interesting talks, and Irene Davis gave a recitation. A Male Quartette rendered a number which was much appreciated. J. W. Litwiller made a few remarks on his experiences with the boys and girls at the Home. Benjamin Rupp then gave an inspiring talk. Andrew Vercler also gave some remarks. Closing prayer was offered by Mr. Rupp, after which 100 boxes of Chums were given to the boys and girls under ten years of age and ice cream served to all present. Later the young men engaged in a base ball game.[6]

In the spring of 1924 a new orchard of 100 fruit trees was planted by D. N. Claudon and C. R. Zimmerman both of Meadows, Illinois. The latter was the donor of the trees. Shrubbery was also planted about the lawn and around the buildings. At Christmas time, by means of a fund raised through special donations, a Bible was given to every child of ten years or older. The practice is to be continued.

In 1919 Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schmucker were in charge of the work with Mr. and Mrs. Aaron King, Sarah Short, Phoebe Bertsche, and Bessie Stuckey as helpers. Miss Mary Smucker taught the primary and Miss Rosella Stoltz the grammar grades.

In 1925 Mr. D. N. Claudon was the superintendent of the institution and Sarah Short was the matron. Mr. J. W. Litwiller was the assistant superintendent and secretary. Mary Schmucker was the assistant secretary, and J. D. Jorg treasurer.

---

[6] *Zion's Tidings,* July 1, 1925, p. 6 f.

The land and buildings represent a value of at least one hundred thousand dollars. There is a complete system of water works. A hot water furnace supplies the heat. The buildings are insured in the Brotherhood Aid Association.

CHAPTER XLII

THE MENNONITE SANITARIUM AND TRAINING SCHOOL AT BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS[1]

As early as 1893, there were a few Mennonites who were then interested in the establishment of an institution for the sick. In May of that year the Brokaw Hospital was organized to be controlled by Protestant people. About five thousand dollars were collected for the project but nothing else was done. In 1895 the physicians of Bloomington and Normal organized and secured an option on the location where the Brokaw Hospital now stands. The organization formed in 1893 now joined them and gave them their money.

A building was erected the same year. In 1896 the hospital opened and was called the Deaconess Memorial Hospital. From the very beginning the hospital was managed by Mennonite deaconess nurses under the leadership of Rev. John A. Sprunger a member of the Defenseless Conference. It remained under their supervision until August, 1907. There were a few Mennonite leaders in the Central Conference who were ready to continue the work but it seemed the time was not yet ripe for the support of the church and so the Brokaw Hospital was given over to the Methodist Episcopal Deaconess Society of Chicago.

The interest in a hospital by Mennonites persisted. In 1908 at the Central Conference church conference

---

[1] Material from article by Rev. Emanuel Troyer, Carlock, Illinois, in the *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XIV, May, 1924, p. 112; Hospital notes as appearing in *Christian Evangel* and *Zion's Tidings;* interview with Benjamin Rupp, Superintendent of the Sanitarium; and William B. Weaver's notes on "History of Central Conference of Mennonites."

Rev. Andrew Vercler discussed the subject of the need of trained nurses. This need was particularly felt when foreign mission work was established in 1909. They were interested in the training of nurses so that they might be able to supply the foreign field. The motive that impelled them was the desire to imitate the Master in His ministry of healing. The real agitation for a hospital began a few years later. The chief promoters of this project were Rev. Peter Schantz, and Rev. Emanuel Troyer. In the 1917 conference held at Hopedale, Illinois, September 5th-7th, Troyer urged action on hospital work. A committee consisting of Schantz, Troyer, and Sam Stuckey was then appointed to report to the next conference. From 1917 to the conference of 1918 various talks were given throughout the churches, making an appeal for hospital work. During the 1918 Central Conference session at North Danvers, August 27th-29th, Emanuel Troyer reported for the hospital committee. The delegates retaining the same committee asked them to investigate still further.

The first definite step in organization was taken January 23, 1919, when the Mennonite Sanitarium Association was organized. The association was incorporated the following day. The purpose of the association was to conduct a sanitarium, hospital and training school at Bloomington, Illinois, not for profit, but to help all people in sickness and distress and to further the highest and most progressive ideas of the Mennonite Church. Some reasons given for locating it in Bloomington were that a staff of skilled and reliable physicians and surgeons who had an established reputation could be secured, and that the city, centrally located among the Mennonites, was a moral, Christian town and an educational center. The city of Bloomington, especially the Association of Commerce gave the Mennonite Sanitarium Association a very cordial welcome.

The first directors chosen for the sanitarium were Rev. Emanuel Troyer who is still the president, Rev. Benjamin Rupp who was elected superintendent and is still serving, Rev. Allen Miller, Rev. Joseph H. King and Rev. John Kinsinger. These men are all serving on the (1925) board of directors. It will be noted that these promoters were from the Central Conference of Mennonites with the exception of Benjamin Rupp[2] who was from the Defenseless Mennonites. Originally the Central Conference furnished practically all the enthusiasm for the cause. But since Rupp was connected with it from the beginning it can be seen that the Defenseless Conference had considerable interest. Their conference in session in September, 1919, sustained the efforts of those establishing the hospital and encouraged the local churches to support it.

The basis of this organization is the local Hospital Society. Any five or more members can get together and organize a "Local Hospital Society," and become a member of the Association. They are represented by a delegate who becomes a member of the Mennonite Sanitarium Association that transacts the business. Though no conference is officially represented, the Association is chiefly supported by the two conferences mentioned above. Other Mennonites have furnished money and student nurses, and have patronized the institution.

The first work of the association was the selection of a suitable location for the hospital. The large Harber residence at 1308 North Main street was contracted for. The plot of ground was 95 x 203 feet; 95 feet frontage on Main street with the same frontage on Center street. The building was remodeled and temporarily fitted for hospital use. A large additional lot was later purchased adjoining this property on the south. Street car connections were good in both directions. The building fronts east with a direct view across Main street down Beecher street. The high elevation at this point on North Main street and the main route of travel through Bloomington to Normal make the location ideal. The property is admirably adapted to sanitarium purposes. The house is a well built brick house with eight rooms and hall on the first floor, seven large rooms on the second, a very large attic, and a basement under the whole house. The three large parlors and the spacious hall make ideal rest, reception and waiting rooms, with ample facilities for religious services. This property could not have been replaced for four times the price paid for it. The building is well adapted for the administration department, general offices, kitchen, heating plant, and some very fine rooms for patients; but that a new building should be constructed to take care of not less than fifty patients could easily be seen.

---

[2] Rupp's Biography. Benjamin Rupp was elected to the ministry at th Mennonite Church of Archbold, Ohio. He came to the Salem Orphanage as its first Superintendent in 1900 and became a member o the Salem congregation near Gridley, Illinois, and served as assistant pastor for many years. Later he was made elder of th Defenseless Mennonite Church, Groveland, Illinois, a position h still holds though located at Bloomington, Illinois, as superintenden of the Mennonite Sanitarium.

The first patients were received May 1, 1919. Three capable nurses began their work. The twelve rooms of the hospital were soon filled. The question of a new building was seriously considered by the Board. Estimates and plans were already in hand, when it became known that the Kelso Sanitarium was available. The Kelso Hospital had been founded by Dr. Kelso in 1893. It was a fully equipped hospital with sixty rooms and forty nurses in training. He offered the buildings—a new one had been erected in 1918—and entire equipment for seventy-five thousand dollars. The board of directors called a meeting of the association January 19, 1920. The association voted unanimously to accept the proposition. The Board took full charge of this institution with its training school

May 1, 1920. Dr. Edwin P. Sloan of wide experience and successful practice, and who became president of the Illinois State Medical Society in 1922, was retained as chief of staff. In June, 1920, the building was properly dedicated in the presence of a large audience. The Harber property served as a nurses' home until a few years ago when a home was bought just east of the hospital.

Some of the aspirations of the promoters for the institution are given in an article in the *Christian Evangel.* It is indirectly quoted here. It is the purpose of those in charge to make this not merely a hospital in which ordinary cases are to be treated, but rather to develop it into a very high standing Sanitarium, in which the unusual cases can be taken care of, a sanitarium that shall have a name both far and near, a sanitarium in which treatments along widely diversified lines can be given to patients requiring such. It is planned to give the patients the benefit of the most modern scientific achievements in the way of treatment of ailments and the practice of surgery when needed. The staff in charge is looking into the future, not merely at the present. This sanitarium is to develop, to grow larger, and stronger in usefulness.

For the present the capacity is sixty beds. Under the management of Dr. Kelso, the Sanitarium enjoyed a large patronage and was always full of patients. Dr. Kelso will stay as one of the staff and his practice will flow into the sanitarium. The equipment is pronounced to be the best in Bloomington, in fact in Central Illinois. There is a good operating equipment, a good X-ray outfit, a good bath outfit for the giving of different kinds of baths. This is the only equipment of its kind in the city. The Association has come into possession of a finely equipped institution, ready for going right on without any stop or let-up. There is also a competent staff of nurses, to which several more are to be added.

Another feature not to be overlooked, is the nurses' training school. This is to be a prominent feature of the Sanitarium. This is to give a training under distinctly Christian influence, and this is a point of no small value. The Christian side of the profession of nursing is to be strongly emphasized. This school should appeal to the very best of the young womanhood. Some of the very best Mennonite young women should come to take up this training. Mennonite parents should bring this before their girls. Here is a great opportunity open to them to enter a noble profession paying well for the services rendered and also to render Christian service to others. Next to the home this is the noblest place in which a woman can use her God given talents. There is also an increasingly greater demand for nurses. The sanitarium needs a number of student nurses, girls with high Christian character, to start the course of training now. The more education, the more helpful it will be, but there needs to be coupled with it a love for others and especially for the sick.

In the Sanitarium work lies a great opportunity for the church. It undertakes the modern ideals in the noble art of healing. This is indeed the work which the Church of Jesus Christ should take up. It was He who went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, making the blind to see, causing the lame and halt to walk and even raising the dead. This work is following in the Master's footsteps, doing that which He was so much interested in. This is a really constructive work for humanity and for the church. It is her office to bring the balm of healing to the wounded and the sick, to bring consolation to the dying. This is a part of the work which Christ has given Mennonites to do here in Illinois. It deserves whole-hearted support. Let details be worked out in the Christian spirit of helpfulness to all who need help.

Again this Sanitarium will bring the Church before the people and will help to set her right before the world.

False ideas concerning the Mennonite Church have been too current. It has been pictured sometimes with considerable truth as an unprogressive church, and as one that is not ready and willing to take up a large work. This movement will help to refute such ideas. It will show that the church has a vision and is ready to take up a large work for helping humanity.[3]

The purchase and maintenance of a hospital was an enormous financial undertaking. The board tried various plans for raising funds. An effort was made to get every member of the Central Conference churches in the Bloomington territory to make a minimum pledge of five dollars. This was first accomplished by the congregation at Kouts, Indiana. A number from various places gave pledges of sums as large as five hundred and a thousand dollars. But many were against the idea of the Mennonites doing such work. The institution had to win its way in the face of indifference both from the Bloomington citizens and the Mennonite people. When about seven or eight of the children in the orphanage needed surgical help for the removal of tonsils and adenoids they turned to the Hospital. The splendid treatment received gratis by doctors and Hospital awakened in the churches, especially the eastern churches of the Defenseless Mennonites who had not been quite persuaded of the wisdom of the work, a new sense of appreciation and its possibility as a supplementary institution along side of the orphanage work.

Considerable charity is done other than that mentioned above.[4] There are many cases where special rates must be extended, or work done gratis. This naturally increases the running expenses. The superintendent did much to economize, cutting down expenses about half. The

---

[3] *The Christian Evangel,* Vol. X, No. 5, May, 1920, p. 104 f.

[4] Most people are not aware of the large amount of charity work done by church hospitals.

Thanksgiving Day donation of canned goods, such as fruit, vegetables and preserves was started November, 1921. Friends were urged to donate $2,000 to $3,000 for the furnishing of memorial rooms. At one time a special drive was made by planning to send three committees into each church. The first was to inspire, the second to inform and the third to gather pledges.

As soon as the Association took control of the hospital, steps were taken to reorganize the nurses' training school. It was put on an accredited basis recognized by the state of Illinois. After completing the three year course the student becomes a registered nurse.

The first class of the Nurses' Training School was graduated in April, 1922. The exercises were held from the Normal Mennonite church which was filled to capacity with assembled graduates, officers, visiting clergy and the many friends of graduates and hospital.

Rev. J. H. King read the Scripture lesson, while Rev. Schlagel and Rev. Allen Miller offered prayer. The President of the Hospital Board, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, gave an interesting and inspiring address which was appreciated by all. The diplomas were presented by the Superintendent of the Hospital, Rev. Benjamin Rupp. In addition to this, the graduates were also presented with beautiful class-pins, and copies of a Scofield Bible, the gifts of the Sanitarium Association. An informal testimony meeting developed some very encouraging remarks from ministers, doctors and laymen present. One physician of Bloomington said to one of the directors after this meeting: "I came largely out of curiosity to see at closer range just what kind of work you were doing. I have heard much of your institution lately, but only now do I realize what a really fine piece of work you have accomplished in so short a time." Rev. John Kinsinger pronounced the benediction.

There were fifteen girls who completed the work and became the first graduates from the Mennonite Sanitarium and Training School. They were Blanche Briggs, Ella Cullers, Luella Engle, Mattie Munck, Lanore Dubois, Gale Hereford, Josephine Hickey, Violet Mann, Rachel Nickel, Ethel Nelson, Ruby Cassmore, Lillian Sullivan, Myrtle Vanalta, Mary Frances Ward, and Gladys White.[5] In order to become a Registered Nurse it is necessary for the graduates to take several months in addition at another Hospital. Miss Luella Engle finished this training August 15 and was the first Mennonite girl to do this. At times the management had to put forth urgent requests for more to enter the training. Responses have come from all Mennonite branches as well as other denominations.

After many months of waiting, the Board of Directors were at last successful in buying a new home for the nurses, that would be nearer the Hospital, and thus make it more convenient for them and the superintendent. The property purchased was the S. C. Kirkpatrick home adjacent to the Hospital. The building has ten bed rooms and is quite conveniently arranged for the purpose to which it will be put. The price paid was $11,000.00. This obviates the necessity on the nurses' part of walking back and forth the long distance that separated the Hospital from the old home on Main Street. This old property was sold for $13,750.00.[6]

In 1924, at a cost of about $3,300.00, a new laundry equipment was installed in the basement of the new wing. This equipment consists of an American washer, extractor, mangler, tumbler dryer, and water softener all of which is giving splendid satisfaction and incidentally saved more than its cost the first year of its use.[7]

---

[5] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XII, No. 5, May, 1922, p. 105.

[6] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XIII, No. 12, December, 1923, p. 270.

[7] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XIV, No. 3, March, 1924, p. 58.

Since the taking over of the Kelso Hospital in 1919 the investment reached the total of $194,543.46. Every penny of this has come from Mennonite people. So satisfactory has been this service that the city is now calling for more service. The hospital is filled to capacity. Patients are being turned away. Many are housed in uncomfortably small rooms. The old frame building is a constant fire menace. The directors are appealing to the good people of Bloomington for some aid. Hospital work is not a profitable venture. During the past four years the deficits have aggregated $15,552.65. That makes a total of almost $4,000 over and above what the patients can afford to pay.[8]

The present bed capacity is 45, which number can be slightly increased under pressure, but not with safety or convenience to the health of the patients and nurses. The new plans call for a building of a new wing on the north side, four stories high, to correspond with the present south wing. Joining these two wings will be a building in the rear, containing an elevator and private rooms. The fifth floor of this structure will be reserved entirely for the surgical work. Between the wings will be erected an administration building containing living quarters for the superintendent and a chapel. This will give an additional capacity for Bloomington of about sixty modern and fire proof beds. The approximate cost will be $200,000.[9]

---

[8] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. (misnumbered) XVII, June, 1925, p. 131.

[9] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. (misnumbered) XVII, No. 6, June, 1925, p. 131.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE MENNONITE OLD PEOPLE'S HOME AT MEADOWS, ILLINOIS[1]

The Old People's Home at Meadows is another coöperative activity between the Central Conference of Mennonites and the Defenseless Mennonites. The latter, however, seem to have taken the aggressive in the work. Already in 1901 the Defenseless Conference had passed a resolution that the deacons of the different churches should form a committee to establish a home for the feeble mission workers and the aged. The matter seems to have been held favorably in mind but nothing was done for many years. In 1917 the conference passed a resolution empowering the chairman to appoint a committee of five to investigate the matter of establishing an old people's home and report it at the next annual session. Though the report was given little progress was made, probably due to the stress of war conditions.

Mr. Daniel Stalter of Meadows, Illinois, offered a tract of twenty acres of land including several buildings, one of them a large frame dwelling, which had been partly rearranged to take care of a number of old people. Mr. Stalter was very anxious that this tract be used for an institution of this kind and encouraged Mr. D. N. Claudon, chairman of the investigation committee appointed by the Defenseless Conference, to take on this tract for an Old People's Home.

---

[1] Material from D. N. Claudon, Meadows, Illinois, by interview, correspondence, and his article in the *Christian Exponent,* Vol. 11, No. 16, July 31, 1925, p. 248, reinforced by gleanings from (a) the Defenseless Conference Secretary's book, (b) file of the *Christian Evangel,* (c) file of *Zion's Tidings.*

The Central Conference church conference held at Hopedale, Illinois, in 1917, appointed a committee of three, Rev. John Gingerich, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. Andrew Vercler, to confer with the Defenseless brethren on the Old People's Home. Rev. Peter Schantz, although not one of the committee, urged the project. Each of the Conferences felt it was too large an undertaking for one conference alone.

The Mennonite Old People's Home had its origin in a joint mission board meeting held at the Meadows Mennonite church in May, 1919. The proposition was presented at this meeting and a number of the brethren investigated the tract and were favorably impressed with the location.

A meeting of delegates from the different churches of the two Conferences interested was called and a board of directors elected to incorporate and draw up a constitution and by-laws. Those chosen organized as follows: D. N. Claudon, Meadows, Illinois, President; Joseph Rich, Washington, Illinois, Vice President; S. E. Baughman, Gridley, Illinois, Secretary; Daniel Augustin, Carlock, Illinois, Treasurer; and Moses Roth, Groveland, Illinois. The organization known as Mennonite Old People's Home was incorporated June 6, 1919. The members of the association are composed of delegates selected annually by the several congregations of Mennonites interested in the work. Each congregation has the right to elect a delegate for every hundred members or fraction thereof. The association elects a board of six directors. An attempt was made to interest the (old) Mennonites who were at the same time planning a home at Eureka, but it met with failure. Though both Central and Defenseless conferences are heartily in favor of the work yet according to the manner of electing members to the association it is readily seen that neither conference functions officially. The Defenseless Conference passed a resolution at the 1919 session favoring the erection and maintenance of the proposed Mennonite Old People's Home, and encouraged the different congregations of the conference to elect a delegate as their representative at the annual meetings of the association.

The above named committee called a meeting of the delegates which met October 14, 1919 in the Mennonite Church at Meadows, Illinois. A forenoon and afternoon session was held with 25 ministers and delegates present. Several locations for the proposed old people's home were considered. A visit had been made by the committee to the Dunkard Old People's Home at Mount Morris, Illinois. The final decision was made to purchase the twenty acre tract mentioned above, thus locating the Home at Meadows. Almost $10,000.00 had been pledged by thirteen donors and the committee continued its solicitations. At a later meeting the committee decided to put up the out buildings such as hen house, workshop and hog house which were erected not long after with the lumber from the old buildings. The building committee drew up plans for the Center Building, which was to house the superintendent and family. This building was to consist of a reception room, office and living room; also the dining room and kitchen with a pantry and refrigerator room on the first floor, and with three bed rooms, sewing room, and bath room on the second floor. The east wing was to be joined to the main building by a corridor eight feet in width leading to the individual thirteen rooms. A diet kitchen and two bath and toilet rooms were to be installed in this wing. There was to be a large sun porch or parlor, 16 x 32 feet, which could also be used as a chapel.

Mr. Benjamin Rediger gave the committee a close estimate of the cost of the building, which was approximately $24,000.00 not including the heating and the plumbing. The committee thought that they might be able to reduce this cost to some extent by hiring their own men and getting the material at cost, plus a small per cent for hauling and superintending the work.

The job was awarded to Mr. Benjamin Rediger as general superintendent of construction who was to have charge of the hiring of the different contractors. The excavation was begun in the spring of 1922 and the concrete work and other building operations immediately followed. The center building and east wing as planned above were completed by March, 1923. The total sum expended for the entire property amounted to almost $50, 000.00, two-thirds of which had been raised. The first inmates were received in April, 1923. Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Klassen were chosen superintendent and matron of the home with their daughter as assistant. Mr. Klassen was formerly of Canada and had been connected with the work of the Salem Orphanage for about two years.

The dedication of the institution occurred on Sunday May 20th in the presence of 2,000 people, with an inspiring program which lasted throughout the day and the evening. The first year the home with its capacity of thirteen was filled and a number of applicants had to be refused for lack of room. Thus the Board is desirous of securing funds so the west wing can be erected. Reports of the work appear in the *Christian Evangel* and the *Zion's Tidings* from time to time.

On Sunday afternoon meetings are held in the chapel for the comfort and uplift of the old people, who would not be able to attend religious services elsewhere. Ministers from different denominations are invited in to conduct the services. A regular Thursday evening prayer meeting and Bible study class is also held.

On March first, 1925, Mr. and Mrs. George Gundy took charge as superintendent and matron of the Home and entered upon their duties, having been elected to thi position some months before. Mr. Gundy had formerly been pastor of the Central Conference congregation a Congerville.

There are at present fourteen inmates in the Home and two more rooms have just recently been arranged to accommodate two of those who are on the waiting list There are now fifteen rooms for individuals on the firs floor, also the kitchen and dining room, besides the office and sitting room for the superintendent and family. Also there is a large sun parlor for the inmates which is also used for the chapel services. The bed rooms for the superintendent and helpers are on the second floor of the main building. The completed building will house about forty people.

There are over fifty fruit trees and a few shade trees surrounding the Home. About one-half an acre is in garden truck, about one acre in potatoes, two acres in alfalfa four acres in pasture and the remainder in farm crops The fruit trees consist of apple, apricot, cherry, peach pear and plum varieties. A number of the apple trees are bearing fruit while the other varieties are small trees There is a fine large lawn to the south and west.

The motto of the institution is well stated in the Scripture verse, Psalm 71:9, "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.' The old people appreciate their good, Christian home and the work as a whole has been very successful. The institution meets a long felt need in the two conferences that it represents.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE CHURCH PUBLICATIONS[1]

The first literature of the Defenseless Conference was a report of its first annual session held at Berne, Indiana, October 14-17, 1883. The first real effort of publication was a song book. The German songs were selected by Joseph Rediger and C. R. Egle and prepared by the latter for the printer. Some of the songs were original, being written by members of the church; but most of them came from German song books. The song book, named *Glaubens Lieder,* consisted of 600 German hymns with an appendix of 50 in English. It was printed in 1890 by the Mennonite Publishing Company at Elkhart, Indiana, as a leather volume four by five and three-quarter inches, and had no notes. It was necessary to use it with melodies from the *Philharmonia.* However this book did not long serve its purpose and upon the introduction of the English language, was discarded altogether.

The constitution and by-laws of Salem Orphanage and the conference report for the session held at Groveland, Illinois, December 5-7, 1895, were put in printed form by C. R. Egle. He purchased a printing outfit in Flanagan, Illinois, in 1898. He brought along to conference some of the material which he had printed. The conference, approving of it, proceeded to appoint him as editor of the new German paper, named *Heils-Bote,* with Joseph Rediger and Peter Hochstettler as assistants. The name *Heils-Bote,* meaning "Salvation's Messenger," was suggested by the motto which is expressed in Isaiah 12:3,

---

Material from manuscript, letter, and interview with C. R. Egle, Meadows, Illinois, and the files of the *Zion's Call, Zion's Tidings,* and *Good Tidings.*

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Egle edited and printed the paper for which the conference of 1901 allowed him $144.00. D. N. Claudon became its business manager. In the first issue which appeared in 1898, the editor expressed his hope that the paper would be a real joy bearer to the thirsty pilgrim as he goes along life's highway. The purpose of this monthly paper was to help unify the church and particularly to create interest in the mission work which had been started in Africa. Egle was editor throughout the life of the paper. During the last years of publication the printing was done by the Berne Witness Company of Berne, Indiana. The paper was discontinued in December, 1917, because the old people who read German had died and the younger generation favored the English periodical.

The *Zion's Call,* the English monthly, was also started in 1898, being edited and first printed by D. N. Claudon in the interests of Salem Orphanage. For many years the paper was in control of the Orphanage Association. The annual conference of 1913 adopted the *Zion's Call* as the official church organ. Benjamin Rupp, Aaron Sauder, E. E. Rupp and Amos Oyer have served the paper as editors at various times. The 1918 conference changed it to a semi-monthly paper. Most of the families subscribed for the paper, but there was an annual deficit which the conference had to assume.

The Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ Conference (Russian) paper under the name of *Good Tidings* made its first appearance on July 15, 1919. This monthly paper was edited by G. P. Schultz of Chicago, Illinois. The first issue contained the following notice: This issu of *Good Tidings* comes to many of you as an uninvite guest but it expects to find a warm place in your homes Many subscriptions have already been received and n doubt many more will come during the month.

The Defenseless Mennonite Conference (Egly) o

1920 authorized its publication board to take the necessary steps to consolidate *Zion's Call* with *Good Tidings*. The boards of both conferences met at Meadows, July 18, 1921. The meeting was very satisfactory. The consolidated paper under the name of *Zion's Tidings,* a semimonthly of eight pages, made its first appearance September 1, 1921, with Amos Oyer as editor and G. P. Schultz assistant. Thus again the Defenseless Mennonites were found coöperating with another branch, in one of their activities. The local churches at their annual business meetings elect for the coming year a solicitor for and a correspondent to the church paper. Although in 1922 *Zion's Tidings* was reported to have 871 subscribers, it is not self-sustaining. The paper as recommended by the Defenseless Conference of 1922 has the following departments: Editorial, Contributions, Missions, Education, Young People, and Among the Churches. At present the paper is published monthly under the editorship of G. P. Schultz. For some time the Board has been considering the consolidation of its paper with the *Gospel Banner,* the official organ of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (Brenneman), but so far nothing definite has been done.

The Confession of Faith, Rules and Discipline of the Defenseless Mennonite Church, revised and adopted at the annual conference at Archbold, Ohio, August 30, 1917, was printed the same year by the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 2812 Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. This little booklet of 64 pages, called the *Church Manual,* contains a copy of the charter, a brief history, the constitution and by-laws, the 24 articles of faith, ten rules and discipline, six ordinances, nine sections on officers and workers, and fifteen on forms. The object of this little work, as stated on page 4, is to provide a brief manual which will serve as a guide in the more important concerns, as well as in the ordinary experience of he churches.

CHAPTER XLV

THE SALEM GOSPEL MISSION AND COOPERATIVE MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN CHICAGO[1]

The first missionary interest in the church was taken in the year 1892 through the instrumentality of John A. Sprunger, at that time in mission work in Chicago. And the church supported his work there to quite an extent for some time. However, for some years following, the missionary zeal of the church was directed into Africa where the Congo Inland Mission had been established.[2] But there was still missionary sentiment for work in Chicago. In 1906 the annual conference passed a resolution that a mission should be started there. The work was opened June 24, 1908, in a frame building at 249 Root Street. It was carried on under many difficulties at this location for four years. The present property at 248 Root Street, on the corner of Princeton, was purchased in 1912 at a cost of $13,000. The property consists of a three story brick building the first floor of which is the chapel. The second and the third floors are used as flats in which the workers of the mission are located. On Princeton Avenue is a frame, two-story building consisting of two flats in which members of the mission reside. On Root Street there is also a frame building, the lower story of which is used for an office and the upper story for a flat. A special dedicatory service was held December 15, 1912, on entering this building.

---

[1] Material for this chapter from *The Christian Exponent,* Vol. II, No 20, September 25, 1925, p. 312; article by D. N. Claudon, Meadows Illinois, and interviews with him and J. K. Gerig, superintenden of the mission, reënforced by gleanings from Defenseless Conference secretary's book and file of *Zion's Tidings and Zion's Call.*

[2] See Chap. XL. Congo Inland Mission.

Rev. and Mrs. J. K. Gerig have been superintendent and matron since it was opened. Misses Mary Rediger and Adelle Lugibill were helpers for some time. Emma Slagle Elvin Becker, and Barbara Roth have also spent a number of years as workers at the Mission. Miss Christina Miller and Mr. and Mrs. John G. Rediger have also assisted. The conference gave Amos Oyer a two years' leave of absence from the Congo Inland Mission to complete a course of Bible study during which time he was given a home at this mission. The mission is located in the stock yards district of Chicago, a very needy and wicked part of the city. From its beginning the workers had some severe testing times to keep discipline on the inside and outside, and were compelled to expel a number of Sunday school classes, because of the disorder—the only way to save the work. They began again with twelve in the Sunday school and thus were able to build up a quiet Sunday school which at present numbers from 90 to 120 in attendance. The confidence of the people was gradually won by entering into their homes, helping with the washing, mending clothes, helping them to clean up their houses and caring for the sick.

During the seventeen years of service at the Salem Gospel Mission the following meetings have been held: General meeting 3530, total attendance 300,050; Sunday school services 875, total attendance 70,000, average 80; boys' and girls' classes 223; Bible classes and teachers' meetings 11,010; and meetings at Oak Forest 40. Over 936 meetings were conducted in other Missions, besides what open air work and jail work could be done. During hese seventeen years, 14,464 garments were distributed to the poor, and the workers in the mission paid 7,853 calls at homes of the people. Sixteen wedding ceremonies were performed, 60 babies dedicated, and 110 funerals conducted. And lastly, over 3,000 people have knelt at the altar in the mission for prayer.[3]

In 1917 the Defenseless Conference in annual session granted an allowance of $250.00 a month for the support of the work and also instructed the trustees to install an adequate heating plant. From time to time ministers came in to hold meetings. In 1924 the ministerial meeting of the Defenseless Conference was held in its hall. The mission work was promoted by the use of the Gospel Truck and on one occasion a trip was made through Indiana and Ohio with a group of Christian workers who visited the eastern churches and held meetings in different towns on the way. Many tracts and copies of the Gospel of John were distributed.

Although there were over 50 members belonging to the mission the work did not seem successful. The community had changed so much from the early conditions that the mission no longer served its original purpose. Already, the 1920 conference empowered its trustees with full authority to sell or exchange the mission property. Its sale was continually urged during the next years. Finally an offer of $13,500.00 was received. Plans were made to vacate the building. The workers prepared to coöperate with the Brighton Mission of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in uniting their membership and Sunday Schools. However, since not all the payments were made upon the property, the conference of 1925 declared that mission work should be continued in the old building until final payment shall be made. In spite of this unsettled condition the workers are happy in what they have been able to accomplish.

---

[3] *Zion's Tidings,* December 15, 1925, by J. K. Gerig.

Coöperative Missionary Activities in Chicago

There are six Mennonite Conferences or branches represented in Chicago through their mission work; namely: the (Old) Mennonites; the Central Conference of Mennonites; the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ; the Defenseless Mennonites (Egly); the Krimmer Brueder; and the General Conference of Mennonites. The branches in Chicago in 1908 conceived the idea of sustaining a mission among themselves whose purpose would be similar to that of the Pacific Garden Mission, in working with the down-and-out. The work opened November, 1908, at 437 State Street and was called "The Happy Hour Mission," with G. P. Schultz as superintendent. It was located near the "Loop" in what is known as the "lodging house" district. Thousands of men made their homes in these cheap lodging houses. The price of a bed ranged from a dime to a quarter a night. In this district a large number of saloons were operated, where with each glass of beer a free lunch could be secured. Many of the men lived almost entirely on these free lunches, though the quality of the food was by no means first class.

Gospel meetings were held at the mission every night of the week. The mission was open 365 nights of the year. The meetings began at 7:30 o'clock in the evening and continued until 9 o'clock. The first service each night was an open air meeting conducted on the street in front of the mission. This service usually ran for thirty or forty minutes. After this meeting service was continued in the hall. A number of the men who had been listening to the preaching on the street generally took places in the hall where they heard the story of the Gospel continued, and many a person was converted through these efforts.

The class of men the mission had to deal with made it no easy task. There were burglars, pickpockets, backsliders, ex-ministers, infidels, socialists, scores of drunkards, and boys who had run away from home. The mission workers often met men who had been separated from their families and loved ones for years. Many of these poor fellows did not even have so much as a dime to pay for the price of a bed, and so they found lodging outside under some old sidewalk, or on the roof of some building, or in some dark doorway, or in an empty box-car, or any other place where they could crawl out of sight and avoid being molested by a police officer.[4] The work was closed in 1914.

About 1919 the Mennonites, especially the Central Conference, the Defenseless Conference and the General Conference who had been interested in Jewish work,[5] appointed representatives to meet as a joint committee of home missions. These representatives met at the Salem Gospel Mission to consider joining their Jewish Mission work with the Christian Mission to Israel, under the leadership of Frank B. Solin, a converted Jew. After much discussion the work was consolidated.

The six Mennonite branches maintain the following missions in Chicago (1925):

Branch	Name	Address	Superintendent
Mennonites (old)	Home Mission	1907 S. Union Ave.	S. M. Kanagy
Central Conf.	26th St. Mission	720 W. 26th St.	A. M. Eash
Central Conf.	Home Chapel	6201 Carpenter St.	E. T. Rowe
General Conf.	First Menn. Church	73rd & Laflin Sts.	M. M. Lehman
Def. Mennonite	Salem Gospel	43rd & Root Ave.	J. K. Gerig
Def. Mennonite Brethren in Christ	Brighton Mission	Cor. Lincoln St. & 34th Place	G. P. Schultz
(Unofficial) Def. Menn. Brethren in Christ	Menn. Bible Mission	4215 S. Rockwell St.	A. F. Wiens
Krimmer Brueder	Menn. Mission	2812 Lincoln Ave.	D. M. Hofer

These eight missions coöperate very nicely, at least as well as can be expected of different Mennonite branches. They meet together quarterly in a Sunday School conference. This is an inspirational meeting consisting chiefly of addresses by the superintendents, workers, members, and supporters of the mission work.

---

[4] *The Christian Evangel,* November, 1910, pp. 10, 32.

[5] *The Christian Evangel,* Vol. IX, No. 11, November, 1919, p. 244.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE BROTHERHOOD AID ASSOCIATION[1]

Several years before the association was actually formed, there had been talk of organizing an aid which would cover losses of property. Some other branches of Mennonites had already established such organizations. The conference, however, seemed opposed to it. Aaron Souder, a young minister since deceased, saw the service that could be performed so he advocated it. His idea was that of coöperative assistance reduced to a system.

The 1916 conference appointed Aaron Souder, Moses Roth and D. H. Claudon as a committee to investigate the formation of a Mutual Benefit Protective Association for the Brotherhood. At the 1918 annual session this committee was authorized to form a church aid association. Accordingly that fall "The Brotherhood Aid Association of the Defenseless Mennonite Conference of North America," was brought into being. It did not receive a charter at first, but was later incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio. The original officers were D. H. Claudon, Pioneer, Ohio, president and Aaron Souder, Grabill, Indiana, secretary and treasurer. When Aaron Souder died in the fall of 1919, Amos Witmer took his place. The 1925 officers were Amos Neuhauser, Bluffton, Indiana, president, elected in 1923; J. K. Gerig, Chicago, Illinois, vice-president; Albert Neuenschwander, Grabill, Indiana, secretary, elected in 1922; Amos Witmer, Spencerville, Indiana, treasurer.

---

[1] Material for this chapter from Albert Neuenschwander, secretary, Grabill, Indiana, and reports of the association in the Defenseless Conference secretary's minutes.

Each local congregation, known as a local district, elects a director. These representatives make up the board of directors who elect the regular officers. These officers comprise the executive board who have the right to appoint directors in local districts failing to elect the same. The directors hold their annual meeting at the time of the annual conference. The association is entirely in the control of the Defenseless Conference. However the original constitution was changed so that "enlistments may be taken from members of other denominations of the same faith, who believe in the doctrine of non-resistance, and oppose secret organizations."[2] Members from both the Central Conference of Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ have taken out policies. The matter of making the association an organization of the three branches was discussed by them in their respective conference sessions but so far nothing has been done. The work has been steadily increasing. It was estimated that $2,000.00 was saved to the members in the year 1921-22. The following figures show the condition of the association in 1925.[3]

Number of Enlistments Aug. 15, 1925	740
Number of Enlistments Aug. 15, 1924	481
Gain for year	259

---

[2] Article No. 1, Section 2 of the Constitution of the Brotherhood Aid Association.

[3] The report of the Brotherhood Aid Association secretary, Albert Neuenschwander, as recorded in the minutes of the 1925 annual conference of the Defenseless Mennonites and printed in the *Zion's Tidings,* Vol. IV, No. 2, September 15, 1925.

Total amount of enlistments Aug. 15, 1925	$3,158,838.00
Total amount of enlistments Aug. 15, 1924	2,084,895.00
Gain for year	$1,074,043.00
Cash on hand Aug. 25, 1924	$1,297.01
Received	2,415.82
Total	$3,712.83
Paid out for year	2,417.28
Balance on hand August 25, 1925	$1,295.55

The secretary has the following to say in regard to the purpose of the organization: "The principle and foundation of the Association is established upon mutual aid of brethren. Compare it with any old line insurance organization. It is more than an insurance company. Galatians 6:2 admonishes us to 'bear one another's burdens' and we believe we are not violating the Apostle's command when we organize to do this systematically, and therefore we earnestly solicit your coöperation by enlisting your personal property with the Association. 'Be not weary in well doing.' We may not always see the results of our efforts or labors, as in the case of our departed brother, (Aaron Souder), but his good work lives after him and has greatly multiplied."

The president adds further: "The word 'Brotherhood' means a body of men of the same profession associated together. 'Aid' means to assist or help. The meaning of the Brotherhood Aid can be nothing other than a unity consisting of a body of men or brethren joined hand in hand stretching forth a helping hand to the brother that is in need and to the member that is unfortunate in losing his home or his property by fire, lightning or storm. This Aid is not an insurance company nor a money making institution. No one reaps a benefit from this Aid but the unfortunate members. I believe that we all agree in this respect that the individual that is unfortunate through either of the above mentioned causes is in need of help. However, some of us may have come to the conclusion that we can reach a helping hand to the needy one without being a member of the 'Brotherhood Aid' with a policy. To such a conclusion I heartily agree, and sincerely believe that I am voicing the sentiment of every member of the Brotherhood Aid. But when we have a policy it acts as a guide as to how much we should help, and thereby helping to the extent in which we expect to be helped, should we be so unfortunate. Another conception we may have regarding the Brotherhood Aid is this, that when an individual becomes a member of the Brotherhood Aid and accepts a policy, he puts his trust in the Brotherhood Aid in place of trusting God. This however is a wrong conception. The Brotherhood Aid does not want the individual to lose faith in God and put his trust in the Aid. Be it far from it, and let us beware of the idea that by taking a policy we are trying to get ahead of God. This is never the intent of the Brotherhood Aid. May God forbid such thoughts to enter into our hearts and minds. The Brotherhood Aid is grounded and based on the Word of God; supported, governed and upheld by the Elders and Conference of the Defenseless Mennonite Church; and extends a hearty welcome to every one of its members and to every member of other churches of like faith. Brethren, let us look at this matter in the right light and go hand in hand, putting our shoulders to the wheel and let us not get weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6:9, 10. If we want to show our brother sympathy let us not do it in words only, but with our means also. Brother, which do you believe is the more acceptable before God and men—the one that extends his sympathy with words, or the one that extends it with means? Let us remember that actions speak much louder than words."

A condensed statement of the object appears on the face of the policy, "We, the members of the Defenseless Mennonite Churches of North America, and all others who shall afterward become members of this Association, for the mutual benefit of securing our property against loss by fire, lightning or storm, of bearing one another's burdens, of avoiding the unequal yoke spoken of by Paul, II Cor. 6:14, and of paying losses on property which we, as simple God fearing people, claim to be inconsistent as becometh the followers of Christ, do ordain and establish the following Rules and Regulations found on the back of this Enlistment."

Since the officers receive no salary and organization is not operated for profit, the running expenses are kept at a minimum. So far it has been necessary to make but one assessment during the year. Since the close of the first year of operation the assessments have been only ten cents on a hundred dollars which is an exceptionally low rate. The members are well satisfied with the work of the association.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH ASSOCIATION[1]

The Defenseless Mennonites had withdrawn from the Amish body in 1864-66 because they felt that the mother church was dead. It was but a generation later that some of the Defenseless members began to complain of a loss of zeal in their body. Perhaps in a certain sense this was the case. At least the church could have been more active in undertaking missionary work. Some, even from the time of origin of the branch, had felt that immersion should be the method of baptism but the conference left it open to the individual.

This feeling found a champion in the person of J. E. Ramseyer. The new movement had its beginning in a conference discussion in 1896. Ramseyer, with some followers and co-laborers, promoted the cause by evangelistic meetings. From all of the Defenseless Churches, with the exception of the Salem Congregation near Gridley, new churches were formed. But the leaders were not satisfied to gain members from the mother congregations only. By intensive evangelism, many not formerly Mennonites were brought into their congregations. Churches were also established in new communities. For this reason, no doubt, the branch is justified in claiming that it is not a part of the Mennonite body. It certainly is not a purely Mennonite branch.

"Owing to the fact that a number of persons in different denominations were deeply impressed, some years ago, with the need of better opportunities for cultivating the deeper spiritual life, for promoting the fuller teaching of the Word of God, and for engaging in more aggressive missionary work, it became evident that the Holy Spirit was leading to the formation of a new organization.

---

[1] Material for this chapter chiefly from interviews with D. N. Claudon and C. R. Egle, Meadows, Illinois, and Peter Birky, Morton, Illinois.

"Accordingly these persons entered into an organization in the year of 1898, under the name of the Missionary Church Association, for the purpose of meeting these needs. This Association was incorporated in the state of Indiana, in the year 1905.

"The principles that led to the original organization are expressed in the following doctrinal statement, held by the primitive church, and recorded in the Word of God.

(1) The divine and plenary inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures.
(2) The trinity of the Godhead.
(3) The deity, virgin birth, and sinless humanity of Christ.
(4) The person and work of the Holy Spirit.
(5) The total depravity of man by nature.
(6) The substitutionary death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
(7) The necessity of the new birth.
(8) The enduement with the Holy Spirit as a definite crisis experience after the new birth, to guide us, to endue us for service, and to transform our life into Christ's image.
(9) Practical holiness, and the maintenance of good works.
(10) Divine healing for the body as provided in the atonement, in answer to the prayer of faith.
(11) The unity of the true church as the mystical body of Christ.
(12) The reality and personality of Satan.
(13) The course of this world as under the Prince and the power of the air.

(14) The duty of the church to give the Gospel to all men.
(15) The personal, premillennial, and imminent coming of Christ.
(16) The resurrection and future immortality of the body.
(17) Life everlasting for believers, and the endless punishment of the impenitent.
(18) The apostasy of the present age, culminating in the judgment of the great tribulation.
(19) The literal and personal reign of Christ on earth during the coming age.
(20) The bringing in of the new heaven and the new earth as the final state.

"The sole aim of this organization is, as has been from the beginning, to hold and propagate these doctrines."[2]

While this body is a bit more radical in its doctrines, especially baptism, it will be noted that it is very similar to the parent body. The original ill feeling is fast dying out. From the friendly coöperation existing at present it is possible to predict reunion. The Association, which has twenty churches, holds an annual conference which undertakes activities similar to the Defenseless Conference. It maintains the Fort Wayne (Indiana) Bible Training School, established 1904, of which Rev. J. E. Ramseyer is president and B. F. Leightner, principal. Rev. C. R. Egle of the Salem Defenseless Congregation near Gridley, Illinois, strangely enough, was a member of its Board. Their official organ is *The Missionary Worker,* edited by Rev. H. C. Thiessen, Chicago, Illinois, and published semimonthly at Pandora, Ohio.

The Missionary Church Association movement in Illinois affected the Defenseless church a mile east of Groveland, dividing it in 1898. Those members who withdrew, met in the Groveland town hall under the leadership of J. C. Birky, now a Missionary to China. The services, originally held in the afternoon were changed to the morning. After a few years a small meeting house was erected. When the Methodists gave up their work in Groveland, their building, which was in bad repair, was purchased for $500.00. Various pastors who served in Groveland were, S. D. Birky, A. N. Clauser, S. J. Grabill, Kinzer, John Hass, A. F. Albro, and J. J. Fliginger. The congregation supports Clarence I. Birky in Africa. Money is also donated for work in China, India and South America. The membership is about fifty. Communion service is held quarterly. Though feet washing is observed by some it is not the rule. J. W. Birky, Hiram Amstutz, Amos Mitchell, Carl Norquist, and Frank Rittale have been Sunday School superintendents at various times. At one time the David C. Cook Sunday School literature was in use but at present the "Bible Scholars Quarterly" of the Union Gospel Printing Company, Cleveland, Ohio, is employed. The Sisters have no sewing circle of their own but join with "The Aid" of the Defenseless congregation. Those drafted during the war took up non-combatant service. The church uses the Defenseless burial ground which it helps to keep up.

---

[2] From the Constitutions of the Missionary Church Association and the Missionary Churches, 1916 edition, p. 3 f.

Rev. S. D. Birky, at present of Pasadena, California, but originally of the Groveland Missionary Church, was the founder and for many years pastor of the Mt. Olive Missionary Church in Peoria, Illinois. This congregation can be considered an outgrowth of the Groveland church. The Groveland and Peoria congregations are the only representatives of the Missionary Church Association in Illinois.

BOOK IV

THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES

(The Stuckey Amish)

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE YODER CHURCH, THE MOTHER CHURCH

Although the history proper of the Central Conference of Mennonites does not begin until 1872, yet it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the Amish settlement made in Central Illinois, roughly designated as Bloomington-Peoria, in order to get an adequate conception of the origin of this branch.[1]

The settlement was begun in 1829 along the Mackinaw River in the southeast corner of Woodford County and northwest corner of McLean County. By 1835 this large territory had organized itself into what was known as the Mackinaw Meeting. The first members who settled on McLean County soil were Peter Maurer and family who located not far from the present Rock Creek Fair Ground. Those in the Rock Creek territory began to meet by themselves and organized their own congregation in 1851. This Rock Creek congregation, called the Yoder Church, erected the first Amish church-house in Illinois in 1853. Hessian settlers had considered themselves a part of this congregation but their leader was expelled. In 1854 they organized a congregation and later erected a meeting house south of Danvers. Some from this region with additions from the Partridge Creek Settlement had moved northeast onto Gridley Prairie where a congregation was organized about 1860.

---

[1] See Book I, Chaps. VIII and X.

The general information for this section, Book IV, "The Central Conference of Mennonites," comes from Smith's books *Mennonites of America* and *The Mennonites.* The detailed material was secured by personal visits and interviews by myself and H. E. Nunemaker, pastor of the Danvers Mennonite Church, Danvers, Illinois plus a thorough search of the complete files of the Central Conference official organ, *The Christian Evangel,* and the *Central Conference Year Books.* The former contained a helpful history of the Conference which, beginning December, 1921, ran through four issues, being written by Aaron Augspurger, pastor of the Anchor Mennonite Church, Saybrook, Illinois. All this was checked and reinforced by correspondence, pamphlets, papers, minutes, and reference to other Mennonite literature. When almost completed, William B. Weaver's notes for his valuable book, the *History of the Central Conference of Mennonites,* became accessible. Some of his material has been inserted into this treatise.

In 1831 settlement was begun in the region of present-day Peoria along the creeks Partridge, Ten Mile, and Dillon. A congregation known as the Partridge Creek or Spring Bay church was organized in 1833. Since it had extended over such a wide territory, in 1837 separate organizations were formed out of it, known as the Dillon Creek and Wesley City congregations. Some of the settlement moved out onto the Delavan Prairie where a church was organized in 1854. Thus this section grew into four congregations.

The Amish began to settle in Putnam County in 1835. Though this developed into a large congregation relocated in Bureau County it was not necessary to subdivide it as in the cases mentioned above.[2] This group need not be discussed at present since they were out of the center of Central Conference Mennonite origins.

In anticipation it may be said that the Mackinaw River Settlement, especially the Rock Creek congregation, was destined to be the chief soil in which the new movement of the Central Conference was to develop. Some of the families represented in this settlement were Bachman, Clark, Detweiler, Garber, Gingerich, Imhoff, Kauffman, King, Kinsinger, Kohler, Lantz, Maurer, Naffziger, Otto,

---

[2] For tabulation of the nine early Amish congregations see Chap. XXXVI, p. 334f.

Reeser, Rediger, Ropp, Rupp, Sharp, Schertz, Springer, Streid, Strubhar, Stuckey, Stutzman, Swartzentruber, Yoder, Zehr, and Zook. Christian Ropp, one of the earliest and most influential Illinois bishops, came from Alsace as a young man and located on the Mackinaw in Woodford County in 1834.[3] It was he who, having been ordained to the ministry in 1840 and to the office of bishop in 1846, organized and for many years served the various congregations that grew out of the Mackinaw Meeting, namely, Rock Creek, Gridley Prairie, and Roanoke. He lived to a ripe old age, dying in August, 1896. Jonathan Yoder,[4] familiarly known as "Yony," was in direct charge of the Rock Creek congregation. He came from Juniata County, Pennsylvania, in 1851. He was a typical Pennsylvanian and adhered strictly to the old customs regarding clothes and church practices. He was said to have been an eloquent speaker and able to handle both the English and the German. He was a leader among the Illinois Amish and a promoter of the General Amish Conference which has been treated at some length in chapter XIX. "In religious conferences and in questions of church polity he served very much the same purpose as a governor on a steam engine, but always very clearly following the truth as he understood it. In thought and religious interpretations he was far in advance of his colleagues. He was always seeking the welfare of the church, careful to avoid radical changes, and fearful of disastrous schisms."[5]

The congregation organized by Bishop Jonathan Yoder was called the Yoder Church. It was formed because the Amish were now leaving the timberland along the

---

[3] His autobiography has been given in Chap. VIII, pp. 83-87.

[4] Yoder's biography will be given in the section containing biographies at the end of the book.

[5] Estimate of "Yony" Yoder given in a letter from Milo P. Lantz, Carlock, Illinois.

Mackinaw and the groves and were settling on the open prairies in Danvers, Dry Grove, Allen and White Oak Townships. These people found it very inconvenient to worship with the Mackinaw congregation because of the distance. There was also a nucleus formed for this congregation by the coming of the Pennsylvania families.

The Yoder congregation was organized in the latter part of 1851. After worshiping in the homes for about two years the congregation decided to build a church house. This frame building, erected in 1853, was located at the northeast corner of what is now the Rock Creek Fair Grounds about four miles north of Danvers. This is the first Amish Church House in the state of Illinois and one of the very first in the United States. The church was located on the farm of Joseph Gerber. Some of the men particularly interested in the building of a church house were the bishop, Rev. Jonathan Yoder; the deacons, Michael and Jacob Miller;[6] Joseph Gerber; Joseph Stuckey, John Strubhar and Christian King. Jacob Miller was one of the solicitors for funds for the church. There was a need for this new edifice because the houses were too small to accommodate the rapidly increasing membership. The church house was a plain frame building without steeple, twenty-eight by thirty-six feet, and cost five hundred dollars. Material for the church building was hauled from Peoria, a distance of over twenty miles. "Niggerheads" (large stones) served as the foundation. The work was mostly gratis and done chiefly by the members. One of the members of this church said that during the summer the pigs from the timber would sometimes seek shelter or shade under the church on Sundays and disturb the meeting. This church building served the congregation until

---

[6] Michael Miller (1795-1873) and Jacob Miller (1811-1893) were deacons in the Rock Creek Amish church who were born in Germany, settled in Butler Co., Ohio, and came to McLean Co., Ill., in 1850 and 1851.

1872. It housed the first Sunday School held in a church house in the Central Conference Mennonite Church.

The ministers in the Yoder Church from 1853-1860 were Rev. Jonathan Yoder, bishop; Michael and Jacob Miller, who had come from Butler County, Ohio, deacons. By 1860 the ministers of the early church, growing old, felt that they needed assistance. It was the custom among the Amish to have a number of ministers in the same congregation. A vote was taken in the congregation and Joseph Stuckey and John Strubhar were elected. They were ordained by Bishop Jonathan Yoder on April 8, 1860. On April 26, 1864, Rev. Joseph Stuckey was ordained bishop by Rev. Yoder. In 1867 Christian Imhoff was ordained as a deacon of the church. Stuckey succeeded Yoder as leader of the church.

The Yoder Church increased in membership from one hundred to about four hundred in the period 1853-1872. This rapid increase was largely due to two causes outside of a natural growth. In the first place the membership covered a large area. The community included a territory with a radius of ten miles. To those that are familiar with this territory it might be interesting to say that some members came to church from near Hudson, others from south of Danvers. The reason for the location of the new church building at Rock Creek was to get as near to the center of this territory as possible. The second cause for the rapid increase in membership was the coming of new settlers from the eastern part of the United States and from Europe.

The activities of the Yoder Church were few. The important one was the Sunday morning church service. This was usually a very long service and often tedious, particularly to the children and young people. They were sometimes found out in the timber, engaging in recreation, rather than in the church house. All the services were in the German language. After the sermon given by one of the ministers the others in turn would bear testimony. This often took considerable time. These services were held every two weeks. About the only other church activity was an occasional singing class at the church. There was no foreign mission work, no young people's work, no women's organization, no institutional work, no evening services and no Sunday School.

By 1867, however, there were those in the Yoder Church who felt that a Sunday School should be organized. There was considerable opposition from the older members of the church, and so the first Amish Sunday School was started in the old Strubhar schoolhouse, a few miles from the church in the summer of 1867. The leading men who urged Sunday School were Joseph Stuckey, John Strubhar, Elias and Iddo Yoder. In the summer of 1869 the Sunday School was held in the Yoder Church on Sunday afternoon. In the summer of 1870 there was a Sunday School started in the Grant schoolhouse in Dry Grove Township. All the teaching in the Sunday School was in the German language. The adults used their Bibles while the children used German primers from which they learned their A B C's. A few years after the building of the new church in 1872 Sunday School was held in connection with the morning service.

From 1850 to 1872 there were great economic and educational changes that took place in Central Illinois that had a very marked effect on the church life of the Amish. As stated before, the early settlers settled along the groves and timberland and thought that the prairies could not be farmed. With the handicaps of no railroads, no bridges, no good roads, prairie fires, wet marshes and ponds they thought it was an impossibility. But by 1860 many of these handicaps had been removed. Townships were organized in 1858 which meant the building of bridges where needed and the making of better roads. Drainage of the prairie lands was introduced among the Amish about 1850 which soon eliminated the marshes and ponds. Settlers now began to move out on the open prairies. In 1850 the government refused the granting of land to settlers on the prairie in order to give the railroads an opportunity to take land grants. But after 1851 when the opportunity was again given for securing land on the prairies, settlers began to buy it for $1.25 an acre. By 1877 this same prairie land sold for $30 an acre, by 1900 for $150 an acre and during the World War for $500 an acre. Drainage of the land with tile, improved farm machinery, and the coming of the railroads have brought great prosperity to the Amish. McLean County is the third wealthiest county in the United States. This prosperity has had a decided effect on the church life. In the first place it is a blessing because it gives the church a large opportunity for service with its money. On the other hand this same blessing may become a curse in the fact that people become self-satisfied and fail to have a vision of the needs of the world.

Another very important development that helped to improve conditions was the railroad. On May 23, 1853, the first train on the Illinois Central and October 16, 1853, the first one on the Chicago and Alton, reached Bloomington. The eastern part of Woodford County and the southern part of Livingston County were not settled until the Chicago and Alton, Illinois Central and Toledo, Peoria and Western railroads were built. Towns, and farmers' elevators began to spring up along these railroads. The Lake Erie and Western was built from Bloomington to Peoria in 1887. Carlock, Congerville and Goodfield were laid out in 1888. Towns like Slabtown and Farnisville on the Mackinaw, and Oak Grove in the East White Oak district died. All this encouraged the settlement of the prairies. The railroads were a very important factor in the history of the local expansion of the Amish in Central Illinois.

There were also marked changes in education from 1858-1860. In 1855 the legislature passed a law providing for free schools supported by taxation. For the Amish this meant the public schools and the teaching of the English language. Their children now learned the English language and could not understand the German preaching in the churches. This helped to bring about the transition from the use of the German to the English in the Amish church. It also meant that the Amish children would receive more schooling throughout the year. The term of school soon increased from a few months to five, six or seven months. A little later only a very few of the first Amish young people went to high school and prepared for teaching in the public school. It is this group of young people who later made demands upon the church for Christian Endeavor Societies, English Sunday Schools and more progressive church work.

CHAPTER XLIX

JOSEPH STUCKEY, THE CHURCH FATHER

Joseph Stuckey, the "father of the group of Amish churches later known as the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites,[1] was born in Alsace, July 12, 1825, the son of Peter Stuckey, originally of Switzerland, and Elizabeth Sommers of France. He was the oldest child in the family of six, with three brothers and two sisters. Joseph came with his parents to Butler County, Ohio, in 1830. It was here that he attended school in a little old log schoolhouse for about six weeks, the only formal education that he received. About 1843 he was baptized in the Augspurger Amish Church by Rev. Jacob Augspurger. The Amish at this time were still holding their services in the homes of the members. He was married to Barbara Roth in December, 1844. She was born in Alsace, March, 1821 and had come to America with her parents in 1842. They with their little daughter Jacobina (Mrs. Joseph S. Augspurger), came to Peoria in October, 1850 and located in the Rock Creek territory on a farm a few miles north of Danvers. The family had come by the way of the Ohio River and the Illinois River to Fort Clark which is now Peoria. Stuckey with his brother-in-law, John Habecker, worked for a few months in a packing house and then in March, 1851, came to Danvers Township in McLean County. On September 10, 1852, his son Christian R. was born. Stuckey rented land for farming until 1858 when he bought forty acres a few miles northwest of Danvers. He paid three dollars an acre for the land he bought. Stuckey added to his land until he had two hundred acres at the time of his retirement in 1868. He engaged in active farming until October, 1868, when he retired and lived with his daughter, Mrs. Augspurger, who moved on his farm. In 1877 he moved to the town of Danvers where he resided until his death in 1902. He was very industrious, careful in his business dealings and had great administrative ability.

---

[1] The word Illinois has been dropped from the official name making it Central Conference of Mennonites.

Stuckey's father died February 22, 1860, and his mother in 1885. His wife died April 27, 1881. He was then married to Mrs. Magdalene Habecker, a sister of his first wife. Rev. Stuckey died February 5, 1902. Before his death he selected the text for the funeral sermon, II Timothy 4:7, 8. Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. Valentine Strubhar and Rev. John Kohler had charge of the services. He was laid to rest at the Imhoff Cemetery. His second wife died May 17, 1904.

The Stuckey family was a charter member of the Yoder Church. Joseph Stuckey was one of the chief promoters in the building of the Yoder Church House in 1853. April 8, 1860, he was called to the ministry and ordained by Bishop Yoder. Four years later, on April 26, he was ordained as a bishop by Rev. Jonathan Yoder, assisted by Rev. Christian Ropp and Rev. Jacob Zehr of the Mackinaw Church. He had very little training for his work in the ministry, yet he had a great deal of mental ability. Practically all his training came through personal effort. Mr. C. R. Stuckey, his son, states the situation well when he says, "He was then a young man, just a common farmer with very limited schooling, working hard every day on the farm, trying to establish a home for himself and his family, and lay up something for old age. You can well imagine the disadvantages he was at to serve the church as their pastor and at the same time try to provide a home and some meager comforts for his family. Well do I remember how my father used to pore over his Bible after doing a hard day's work until in the late hours of the night, when perhaps the greater number of his congregation were sound asleep and comfortably resting in their beds, but in the morning he would be up bright and early, ready for another hard day's work." Stuckey in spite of all these handicaps was very successful in his pulpit efforts. One of the ministers who was then a young man says, "I do not think that I have known any one of Rev. Stuckey's limited educational opportunities and of his environment who was able to draw so large crowds as he in his pulpit efforts." He was a fluent speaker and a very clear thinker. Very few Amish preachers of his day were able to draw as large crowds as he.

Rev. Stuckey did practically all of his studying and preaching in the German language. There is an interesting incident told as to how he learned his German. As a child he was taught the French language. He came to America from Alsace at the age of five. During the time of the ocean trip he played with the children of a number of German Amish passengers and from them he learned the German language. After he came to Illinois he also learned to read the English language. Again there is an interesting incident told by his daughter as to how he learned the English language: He came home from Bloomington one day with the *Daily Pantagraph,* an English daily paper of Bloomington. When asked by the family what he wanted with it he said he was going to learn to read English!

Stuckey became very active locally and among the Amish in general. He was one of the first to subscribe to the *Herald of Truth* which made its first appearance in 1864 at Chicago. He wrote many articles for it. He also gave accounts of his numerous travels, which were reported in its columns. Before 1870 he had visited practically all the Amish communities east and west. He preached in these various places and was called back repeatedly. He was one of the leaders who promoted the Amish General Conferences in which he figured actively for several years. Being more liberal-minded on religious questions than most of his fellow ministers, he came into friction occasionally with other leaders even before 1870, the date when the main trouble began.

✓ About this time a certain Joseph Yoder, a member of Stuckey's congregation, a school teacher and writer of verse, wrote a long poem which he published under the title of "Die Frohe Botschaft" (The Joyful Message). The leading thought in the poem was that all men will be saved and none punished eternally for their sins. This sentiment was rank heresy among the Amish, as among all orthodox Christians, and naturally aroused a good deal of resentment. The conference which met in Fulton County, Ohio, in 1870 took up the question, "What is to be done with those members who do not believe in future punishment?" After a prolonged discussion it resolved to expel such from the church if they persisted in their errors. Stuckey, who was tender-hearted, refused to excommunicate the latter and thus ran counter to the decision of the conference.

The next session, held in Livingston County, Illinois in 1871, took up in secret meeting the contention between Stuckey and his fellow ministers. A committee of seven was appointed to investigate the matter. Another committee of three—Abner Yoder of Iowa, Samuel Yoder and Moses B. Miller of Pennsylvania—was appointed to visit the churches and report their condition at the next conference. The conference of 1872 met in LaGrange County, Indiana. After reading the report of the above committee which was carefully worded so as not to make any definite charges but was full of general admonition, Stuckey was requested to make a public confession, and acknowledge his error especially in relation to his fellow bishop, Christian Ropp, and promise with the help of God to be more careful in the future. Stuckey was present at the conference but his name does not appear on the official register, being withheld at his own request, as he said that he was absent part of the time, and did not wish to subscribe to the proceedings with which he had nothing to do. There is no evidence from the records that he made the confession. "Die Frohe Botschaft" again came up for discussion at this session. Several verses were read before the conference. It was again declared that all members holding such opinions as were expressed in the poem were to be placed under the ban.

In the meantime another committee consisting of J. K. Yoder, J. P. King, and A. Yoder, all easterners, was appointed to visit the Illinois congregations and adjudicate the difficulties between Stuckey and Christian Ropp. In October of 1872 this committee visited Stuckey and among other questions asked him whether he acknowledged the author of "Die Frohe Botschaft" as a brother in the church. He replied in the affirmative and added that he had permitted Yoder to participate in the communion service.* Whereupon the committee declared that they could no longer consider him in harmony with the church at large, and consequently they were obliged to withdraw from him and his congregation. Most of the churches in Illinois accepted the decision of the committee as final. It was announced in the various congregations that Stuckey and his congregation were no longer considered a part of the Amish General Conference. After this he did not attend the conferences which continued to be held until 1878.

---

* One report says that Stuckey "set Yoder back" from the communion service.

There was no formal division however, and no excommunication.

The Illinois congregations were independent of each other and each went its own way. At one time delegates from Stuckey's group were sent to the "General Conference of Mennonites of North America" but no official action was taken. In the eighties, when the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference was organized Stuckey's church was not included. Since then, his followers, referred to as Independents, Stuckeyites, or Stuckey Amish, have been considered as a separate branch of the Mennonite Denomination.

This is the story as it appears in the conference reports. Of course this does not tell everything. Back of it all there were in addition to the contentions already mentioned, many petty jealousies and lack of forbearance on the part of various conference leaders. Stuckey was without doubt more liberal-minded than most of the ministers of his time, but on the other hand many of the others, especially the easterners, were still addicted to formalities which have since been discarded. Had the Illinois congregations been permitted to settle the controversy in their own way it is possible that there would have been no division.

Nevertheless as can be gleaned from the visit as reported in the *Herald of Truth* in 1882, Joseph Stuckey must have still been welcome in many of the "standard" Amish Churches. "Recently, Brother Joseph Stuckey of Illinois visited several of the churches of Indiana. He first stopped at Nappanee, and held a meeting on Whit Sunday. After the services nine or ten persons were baptized. On Friday, June 2, he attended the communion at the La-Grange Amish Church, and on Sunday the communion at the Clinton Church, Elkhart County. At this service Daniel Tschantz was ordained to the ministry of the Gospel.

On Monday the fifth communion services were held at the Haw Patch Church. After the services in the evening Brother Stuckey started for Stark County, Ohio, where he was requested to do some church services. His wife accompanied him as far as Haw Patch, and then returned to Elkhart Prairie to her afflicted daughter, the wife of Amos Yoder, where she intends to remain principally until Brother Stuckey's return from Ohio, when they expect to visit for several weeks and to hold meetings in the above mentioned churches. May God bless our dear Brother that his labors may not be in vain, but to the ingathering of precious souls, and the bringing of saints nearer God. Joseph Stuckey of Illinois, returned from Ohio, to Rome City, Indiana, on the fourteenth of June, in company with my wife and her sister where I met them and conveyed them to my home. Brother Stuckey stopped to take a short rest, then visited among the brethren on the Haw Patch till Saturday evening, when he had meeting at the church. We also had preaching on Sunday morning. At this service Brother Jonathan Kurtz was ordained to the ministry. May God bless our young Brother that he may prove a blessing to the church and to the cause of Christ. On Tuesday, Brother Stuckey preached at the LaGrange church, and on Thursday to a large congregation at Clinton, where he bade them farewell. On Friday morning he and his wife started for home. We hope too that the church may be built up, souls saved, and God glorified through the labors of our dear young brethren in the ministry."[2]

Favorable and unfavorable estimates are given of both Joseph Stuckey and Joseph Yoder depending on whether the movement was favored or opposed. Concerning Yoder a present member of the Central Conference expresses himself as follows: "It seems to me that a history of the Illinois Mennonites would not be complete without reference to the life and work of Joseph Yoder, the student, the scholar, the poet, the linguist. It was his writing that stirred the Mennonite circles of the United States in a way that few have. He was gifted in satire and used it when he felt that it would best accomplish the desired end. The virtues of a Christian life were extolled, and the fundamental teachings of the Christ upheld in plain, pure, vigorous language."[3]

---

[2] G. Z. Beller in the *Herald of Truth,* Vol. XIX, June, July, 1882.

Stuckey's congregation stood by him in this contention. He also retained supervision over a small church at Meadows, which he had served as bishop before 1870. He had also organized a church near Washington among a number of members of the Partridge Congregation who had become involved in a church quarrel. His brother, Peter Stuckey, had charge of this congregation for many years. Since then many from the old church have joined the Stuckey following, which has grown continually from the first.[4]

The Stuckey community had spread over a large scope of territory, east, west, north, and south, and much itineration became necessary. Some members also began to spread to other districts, territories and states, which occasioned much travel and visitation work, and the organization of new churches, so that during the next thirty years of Stuckey's ministry the following ten churches[5] were organized by him and his assistants: East Washington, with Peter Stuckey, his brother, as pastor; Flanagan, with Joseph Zehr and Stephen Stahley; Meadows, with

---

[3] In a letter from Milo P. Lantz, Carlock, Illinois. Others may differ from this estimate.

[4] Some of this information is from Smith, *Mennonites of America*, pp. 248-251.

[5] These congregations are given a more complete treatment in the next chapter.

Andrew Vercler and Joseph Kinsinger; Aurora, Nebraska, with Andrew Oesch and Christian Rediger; East White Oak, with Peter Schantz; Anchor, with Aaron Augspurger; Congerville, with Lee Lantz; Pekin, with Allen Miller; Silver Street, Goshen, Indiana, with J. C. Mehl; Topeka, Indiana, with John Lehman.

Thus through "fathering" by Joseph Stuckey, the North Danvers Church became the mother of many other churches. Recognition of him as the outstanding leader of the branch was shown by the affectionate title "Father Stuckey" by which his followers were pleased to call him. These followers in turn were nicknamed "Stuckey Amish" by outsiders who also must have recognized Stuckey as the main leader.

During his life, Stuckey ordained eighteen bishops, performed two hundred fifty-five marriages, administered baptism to one thousand three hundred and twenty-eight, and preached many funeral sermons. He was the author of several short poems and articles of a religious nature and also a compilation of letters relating to the Amish division in Switzerland in 1863 under the title, *Eine Begebenheit,* which was first published in 1871.

Rev. Stuckey was a large, well-built man physically. This strength gave him power of endurance in the midst of his economic and religious duties. He was a success in his farming while at the same time he was also preparing himself for his work in the ministry. One of the men who knew him said, "He was a large man physically but to me he seemed even larger morally, mentally and spiritually." He was an original thinker and had a great deal of general knowledge. He was well versed in the Bible and had a good memory. A man of sound judgment, his advice was sought by many people in the different phases of life. People sought his advice in relation to economic matters as well as religious work.

Rev. Stuckey was a man of strong personality and therefore a born leader. He lived at the time when, after the death of Rev. Jonathan Yoder, the church needed leadership. Because of this situation he filled a large place in the church. He was endowed with natural talent as a speaker. This enabled him to mould the religious thinking of the Amish Church of Central Illinois. He was a man of firm conviction and yet very considerate of the views of others. Although judged by the present time as very conservative, in his day he was criticized very severely by the Amish leaders for his liberal attitude. The difficulties which he encountered in the Amish Conferences from 1866-1872 were largely due to his progressive ideas and his sympathetic attitude toward those with whom he did not agree. He was blamed by those who opposed him for lack of stability, a man who could be too easily touched and lacking courage to say what he knew he should. He was sometimes blamed for splitting churches when as a matter of fact he was only trying to care for those who had left the old church and were without a leader. He was blamed for being unorthodox because he was sympathetic with those who may even have differed with him theologically. The so-called weakness emphasized by some of those who opposed him proved to be one of his strongest marks of leadership.

In conclusion then it may be said that Stuckey's outstanding qualities were his natural ability for leadership, his pulpit powers, his positive convictions, his great organizing ability and his sympathetic attitude toward people and toward the problems that the church was facing.

CHAPTER L

THE ILLINOIS CONGREGATIONS[1]

The Mother Church

It has been noted previously that when the Amish people came to Central Illinois they selected the timberland and the groves in preference to the open prairie, but that after 1850 when the railroads were built through the country and the drainage system was established they left the timberland and the groves and established their homes on the open prairie. The people of the Yoder Church moved farther away from the Mackinaw and the groves and established their homes farther east and north. The center of the church community therefore also moved farther east. So in order to have the place of worship more convenient, the church decided to build nearer the center of the community. On the other hand the Yoder Church building at Rock Creek erected in 1853 was getting too small for the rapidly increasing membership. It is said by some of those now living who attended the old church that it was almost impossible for the whole membership to get into the church for Sunday morning service. The congregation decided to erect a frame building three miles northeast of Danvers, and two miles south of the old church. The old church was bought by the Mackinaw Amish people now known as the Goodfield Amish Mennonite congregation and used for a few years as a house of worship. The new church building was erected in the summer of 1872 and dedicated Sunday, September 29th. It was larger than the old church, being a structure forty by sixty-two feet. With a few changes this church served the congregation until 1917 when it was remodeled and made a brick-veneered modern church edifice. This is the building now used as the place of worship (1926). After Stuckey's death and when other Amish Churches were established in the surrounding communities such as Congerville and East White Oak, the church was for a time known as the West Mennonite Amish but is now called North Danvers, being in the northern part of Danvers Township.

---

[1] Much of this material was gleaned from the files of the *Christian Evangel,* verified and reinforced by interviews with members of the local congregations. See also the references already given for the source material for this section. See Chap. XLVIII.

The Amish Churches at this time, instead of having one pastor, usually had a number of ministers to serve the congregation. This was true of the North Danvers Church. In the year 1872, when the congregation began to worship in the new church the following were the ministers: Bishop Joseph Stuckey, Deacon John Strubhar, Bishop John Stahly, Deacon Christian Imhoff, Rev. Joseph Stalter, Michael Miller, and Jacob Miller. These men represented the three orders of the Amish ministry: Bishops, preachers, and deacons. The church had a healthy growth.

Because of the death of some of these ministers and the fact that the others were getting old, Rev. Stuckey in 1882 appealed to the congregation for ministerial help. He believed in calling young men to the ministry, an idea which was rather unusual in the Amish Church at that time. The congregation elected two young men, Joash Stutzman and Peter Schantz, who were ordained as ministers by Bishop Stuckey in 1882. Rev. Peter Schantz was assistant pastor of the congregation until 1892 when he became pastor of the new congregation organized in the White Oak district. In 1892 the church again elected two young men, Joseph Clark and Joseph King. They were ordained by Bishop Stuckey April 17, 1892. Clark served but one year when he left for another field. Rev. Joseph King was assistant pastor to Stuckey until the latter's death in February, 1902. King then became pastor of the congregation serving until 1914 when he became pastor of the new church organized at Carlock, Illinois. It was at the beginning of King's ministry that English preaching was introduced into the church. Rev. John Kohler, who was ordained April 30, 1899, and served as pastor with Rev. King after 1902, became the pastor of the church in 1914 and served until about 1920. After several years without a resident pastor, the congregation called Rev. William B. Weaver of Goshen, Indiana, who took charge of the church on July 1, 1922, and is at present its pastor (1926).

A comparison of the church activities of the North Danvers Church with those of the Yoder Church show some marked changes. After October, 1872, the church became more thoroughly organized. Business meetings were now held each New Year's Day when reports were given and the business of the church transacted. Written records of the business meeting were kept after 1880. These records were written in German the first year but after 1881 they were written in English. Officers were elected for the various duties of the church.

The church in this period also encouraged Sunday School work. As stated before, Sunday School was held in the Yoder Church in the afternoon as early as 1869, but by 1880 the Sunday School was held in connection with the morning church service. Both Sunday school and church service were held every Sunday. A report of the North Danvers Church given by Joseph Stuckey to the General Conference Church Secretary shows that by 1890 the Sunday School had organized a Teachers' Meeting. It also shows that the membership of the church in 1890 was four hundred and twenty-five. The present membership is two hundred and eight. The English language was introduced into the song service and Sunday School about 1887 and into the church service in 1893. The Sunday School began the use of graded lessons in 1905.

Although the church did not have any organized mission work the record of 1890 showed that ninety dollars was given that year to foreign mission work and ninety dollars to home mission work in another Mennonite group. Another phase of home mission work was the expansion of the mother church and the establishment of new congregations in the surrounding communities and in other counties. This accounts for the decrease in membership of the mother church. Rev. Joseph Stuckey was largely responsible for the leadership and bishop oversight of these newly organized congregations in this period.

The Christian Endeavor Society was organized in 1892. This was the first Christian Endeavor Society in the Central Conference Mennonite Church. It is significant to note that it was only eleven years after the first Christian Endeavor Society in the United States was organized. It is also only two years after the first Young People's Meeting in the (old) Mennonite Church. Mr. Eli Sharp, a member of the church, was largely responsible for its beginning. He had moved to Minnesota in 1888 and there joined a Christian Endeavor Society. When he came back to the North Danvers Church he introduced Christian Endeavor work among the young people of the church. This encouraged the use of the English language and also marked the beginning of evening services. Other activities, such as Evangelistic meetings, Ladies' Aid, and a Literary Society, were added in the course of time until the church attained a complete working organization. North Danvers is still one of the strongest and wealthiest churches in the conference.

The (South) Danvers Mennonite Church[2]

The second regularly established church of the Central Conference was the South Danvers Mennonite Church. It has already been noted that at the same time that the first Amish came to McLean County, there were also a number of Hessian families that came from Butler County, Ohio.[3] These settlers, both Amish and Hessian Mennonites, brought with them to Central Illinois these same differences. One of the first Hessian families to come to McLean County was Peter Donner, Sr., who settled in Dry Grove Township in 1837. Between 1837 and 1860 a number of Hessian families came, such as the Brennemans, Donners, Gingerichs, Kennels, Kinsingers, Nafsingers, Ottos, and Springers. In 1842, Rev. John Michael Kistler of Butler County, Ohio, came to the community of the Hessian Mennonites. Kistler had been ordained as a minister by his father-in-law, "Apostle" Peter Naffziger, Butler County, Ohio. The Hessian Mennonites held services in their homes with Kistler as their minister. When the Yoder Church was built in 1853, Kistler and his Hessians began to worship at the Yoder Church. After worshiping together for a few years, the congregations discovered that they were very different in their customs and practices. Kistler and Yoder could not agree. Bishop Yoder was an Amishman from Pennsylvania and opposed buttons on clothes and musical instruments in the home and was very strict in his discipline of members. Kistler, being a Hessian, was much more lenient. After considerable disagreement Yoder set Kistler back from communion. Kistler's people, supporting their leader, again worshiped in their homes after 1859.

---

[2] From *Year Book of the Central Conference of Mennonites*, 1922, p. 24 and H. E. Nunemaker, pastor of the Mennonite Church, Danvers, Illinois.

[3] See Book I, Chaps. VIII, IX.

Their pastor went back to Butler County and was ordained as bishop and then came back and took charge of the South Danvers Mennonite Congregation. He remained with the church until 1863 when, because of his radical views on baptism, he withdrew and joined the Christian Church. Later he went to Missouri where he died. The year before Kistler withdrew (1862), the congregation elected Christian Gingerich, who had come from Butler County, Ohio, in 1855, and Michael Kinsinger, who came from Butler County in 1837, to the ministry. They were ordained by Kistler in 1862. In 1863, Rev. Christian Gingerich was ordained bishop by Bishop John Nofsinger of Walnut in Bureau County, Illinois. Gingerich was the leader of the congregation until 1893.

In the spring of 1864 the congregation, with a membership of about one hundred, built the frame church house thirty by thirty-six feet about two miles south of Danvers at a cost of two thousand dollars. The church grew under the leadership of Christian Gingerich. By 1885 Bishop Gingerich requested the selection of ministerial help, so the congregation elected John Gingerich, his son, and John Kinsinger who had come from Butler County, Ohio, in December, 1881, as ministers. They were ordained in September, 1885. In 1893 they were ordained as bishops by Bishop Christian Gingerich and Rev. Peter Schantz of the North Danvers Church. Rev. Michael Kinsinger died in 1895. Bishop Christian Gingerich died in 1908.

John Gingerich and John Kinsinger, after years of faithful service, retired from the active ministry and are at present living at Danvers, Illinois. Rev. L. B. Haigh, returned missionary from Africa, served the church during the years 1921-23, when he moved to Havelock, North Carolina. The congregation then called H. E. Nunemaker of Sterling, Illinois, who became pastor of the church

March, 1924. Nunemaker was ordained as a minister and bishop on March 29, 1925. He resigned January 16, 1927 and became pastor at Comins, Michigan, February 15, 1927. Rev. Peter D. Naffziger assumed his pastorate at Danvers September 1, 1927, and is at present pastor.

One of the first activities of the South Danvers Mennonite Church, outside of the regular Sunday morning preaching service was the Sunday School. The Sunday School was started about 1883, Rev. John Kinsinger being the superintendent. All the teaching was in the German language. The adults used the Bible as a text book while the children used the German primer. The purpose of this primer was to teach them the German language, since the German was no longer taught in the public schools. The preaching was still German so the church felt it necessary to teach their children the German language. About 1895 the young people presented the matter of introducing the English language into the Sunday School to the congregation but the congregation voted it down. Some of the older people suggested that a resolution should be passed that the question dare not be presented for ten years. But it was finally decided that they could not have English for one year. When the end of the year came a few of those that were interested in the English language decided to get the English material and ordered that published by J. F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana, for the Sunday School. A class was started with no objections and from that time the English was used with the German in Sunday School. A few years later Rev. John Kinsinger began English preaching in the church.

By 1914 a number of the older members of the South Danvers Church had retired from farming and moved to Danvers. Since most of these had no way to attend the services in the country they favored moving the church to town. Services had been held on Sunday afternoon at the

Baptist Church in town. The congregation decided to disband in the country and hold all their services there. These began February 20, 1915. Since then the church has been referred to as the Danvers Mennonite Church. Later the church building of the Evangelical Friedens Kirche (Church of Peace) was rented and is still used for the house of worship. The old church house in the country was sold in 1916. The membership of the church is sixty-one.

Mr. J. W. Hilty who had been a member of the North Danvers Church and had there been active in Christian Endeavor Work was largely responsible for introducing this work in the church, soon after it had moved to town. The Ladies' Aid Society was organized in April, 1911.

For many years the relation between this church and the North Danvers Church was unfriendly but long since the differences have been forgotten.

The Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington[4]

The Washington Mennonite church, as it was first known, originated through a conversation which took place between Bishop Jonathan Yoder of the Rock Creek congregation and Peter E. Stuckey in the month of May, 1866, at the latter's home. In the early sixties a number of Mennonites settled around the little city of Washington, Illinois. Among them were Burkeys, Engles, Garbers, Guths, Nofzingers, Rissers, Peter Strubhar, Peter E. Stuckey, John Sweitzer, Sr., and John Unzicker. These people had moved in from various parts of the United States and from Europe. In Illinois they came from Danvers then known as Concord, and from Princeton, Spring Bay, Metamora, and other places. The distance from a Mennonite church, and various other conditions prevented them from attending any of the churches. They really belonged to the Partridge Congregation. Jonathan Yoder, a very close friend of the Stuckeys, came over from Danvers to visit Peter Stuckey, and during the conversation Yoder inquired of Stuckey as to where he and his wife were attending church services. Stuckey's reply was that having quite a distance to the church they did not attend very often. Elder Yoder offered to preach providing the members there would secure a place for the services.

---

[4] The material upon the Calvary Church is chiefly from Valentine Strubhar, present pastor, who furnished a carefully prepared manuscript. He credits much of his information to a letter received in 1917 from Peter E. Stuckey, charter member and one of the first ministers of the church, who now lives at Wayland, Iowa.

The following day Stuckey visited Peter Strubhar, Sr., who was then living one mile east of Washington, and mentioned Elder Yoder's proposition. Immediately arrangements were made for a meeting at the home of Peter Strubhar for the following Sunday. The news of this first meeting spread very rapidly and arrangements were made for seats by sawing saplings about two and one-half feet in length for benches to lay boards on. Everything was arranged for the meeting in short order. Elder Yoder was unable to come on account of illness, but arrangements were made for his assistant pastor, Joseph Stuckey, to take his place. Stuckey was a young man with plenty of executive ability and a very able speaker who drew a very large crowd for the meeting. The people came on horse back and wagon, some of them for twenty miles, and many of them walked for several miles. Immediate steps were taken to continue the meetings. They were held in the homes of the members until the summer of 1869 when it was decided to build a place of worship.

A church building thirty by forty feet was erected a mile and a half southeast of Washington at a cost of $2,000.00 and was dedicated in the fall of the same year.

Owing to the rapidly growing interest in this new organization, as well as the distance together with the inclemen weather and sometimes almost impassable roads, it was decided to appoint two assistant pastors to have supervision of the congregation. Consequently a meeting was called in December, 1868, at the home of Daniel Nafziger, now deceased, one and one quarter miles east of Washington. The lot fell upon Peter E. Stuckey and Peter Gingerich who were ordained by Joseph Stuckey Stuckey was made bishop in 1875. Gingerich affiliated himself, about 1880, with the Partridge Amish-Mennonite Church. Later on Rev. Jacob Unzicker of the Pleasant Grove Amish-Mennonite Church was also affiliated with this congregation, and served as one of its pastors until his death in the spring of 1893. The organization prospered under this new leadership and grew to be one of the strongest churches which Elder Joseph Stuckey had organized. By the year 1890 it had a membership of two hundred and forty. At present the congregation numbers over three hundred.

In February, 1889, Peter Stuckey, feeling that his services were needed by the young church springing up and being organized near Aurora, Nebraska, sold his farm and located near Aurora, Nebraska, where he assisted the church there. In the fall of 1889, D. D. Augsburger and Michael Kinsinger were ordained as ministers by Joseph Stuckey. In the spring of 1892, Augsburger moved to Aurora, Nebraska to assist the congregation there. Kinsinger was left alone in charge of the work. Christian Imhoff and Valentine Strubhar were ordained to the ministry in January, 1893. The former a few years later identified himself with the South Washington Church but the latter has continued in this work to the present time.

A transition from the German language to the English was taking place in the church. The young people of the church who had been taught in the public schools in the English language only, appealed to the church for a recognition of the English language, especially in the Sunday School. This caused considerable disturbance especially among the older members. Those who insisted on the German language in worship decided to form a separate organization. Thus in 1893 the South Washington Mennonite Church with Rev. Michael Kinsinger as its elder came into being. The original church was then referred to as the East Washington Church. Fellowship between the two congregations has long since been restored.

In the year 1907 the members of the East Washington Church, feeling that more room was needed to accommodate the numbers, decided to rebuild. A forty by sixty feet building was erected and was dedicated on December 29, 1907. In 1911 the voice of the church was taken for an assistant pastor which resulted in the appointment of Benjamin F. Esch.

By 1923 more than one hundred members of the East Washington church had moved into Washington. Most of them had no way to get to the country church. In the fall of 1923 at a meeting the question of moving to the little city was taken up. The entire congregation present at that meeting was in favor of the movement without one dissenting voice. Within a very short time a building committee was appointed to find a location and to submit a plan for a new building. The splendid new brick structure was completed in 1925. On July 19, dedication services were held in charge of Dr. J. E. Hartzler. The congregation assumed the name of Calvary Mennonite Church of Washington. It has the usual activities of Sunday School, Christian Endeavor, Ladies' Aid, Missionary work. It also held a Christian Workers' Institute in January, 1926.

Flanagan Mennonite Church[5]

In the year 1866 families from near Hopedale and Tremont, Tazewell County, Illinois, moved into the vicinity of Weston, McLean County, Illinois. These people were originally from Alsace-Lorraine, France. The names are as follows: Joseph Baechler, Simon Baechler, Christian Claudon, Peter Garber, Jacob Orendorf, John Rupp, and Peter Sommer. Joseph Baechler moved back to his native country. Simon Baechler and John Rupp were both preachers, having been ordained to the ministry while living near Hopedale and Tremont, Tazewell County, Illinois. These people being Amish, formed a group of believers in the new settlement. They held church services in their homes every Sunday, until the year 1870, after which they held their meetings in Yates Township Centre School house two miles southwest of Weston. Bishop Joseph Stuckey from Danvers, Illinois, was called as Elder to minister to them. From 1871 to 1876 a number of families from north of Chenoa, north of Gridley, and a few families from near Woodford Station, Woodford County, joined this group at Weston. This addition increased the membership considerably. Since the congregation was widely scattered it was difficult to meet in one place. The distance from one end of the membership to the other was about thirty miles. Seeing this need the congregation was separated to meet in two places for services. Having only one preacher, Rev. Simon Baechler, since John Rupp had moved away years before, it appeared to the members that an assistant minister would be of great advantage. Being willing to choose one of their members, they voted by ballot and the lot fell on Christian Rediger. He was ordained to the ministry in the fall of 1878 by Bishop Joseph Stuckey on the same day he was selected, with Rev. Simon Baechler present. The new congregation was organized at once and the following Sunday the first meeting was held six miles northeast of Gridley, in Jacob King's district school house, Waldo Township, Livingston County. Christian Rediger preached a term of three years in this school house every Sunday. There was Sunday School also.

---

[5] Much of the information for both the Flanagan and the Meadows Churches was received from Andrew Vercler, Meadows, Illinois, in an extensive manuscript.

In 1882 this congregation built a church five miles northwest from the school house and two and a half miles southwest of Flanagan. It was dedicated by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. Meetings in the school house were closed. Sunday School and preaching were held every Sunday. This church, an outgrowth from the original Weston congregation, became known as the Flanagan Mennonite Church.

Rediger left for Aurora, Nebraska, in 1885, and Stephen Stahley was ordained to take his place. Stahley came from Switzerland in 1864. He was ordained to the ministry in 1885. He was later ordained as bishop by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and served the congregation until his death in February, 1916. In October, 1890, Joseph Zehr was ordained as assistant pastor. He was later ordained as bishop by Stuckey. He is at present (1926) the bishop of the church and one of the oldest ministers in the conference. He is assisted in the ministry by Rev. Emanuel Ulrich who was ordained in May, 1918. The membership of the church is about ninety.

Meadows Mennonite Church

The Meadows Mennonite church house was built in 1891, nine years after the Flanagan church house was built. After services were opened in Jacob King's district school house the meetings and Sunday School at the south Weston school house were continued regularly every Sunday as they had been before. Rev. Simon Baechler continued to serve as pastor. At the beginning of the year 1881, the Weston Congregation was in a declining condition. Families began to move into the vicinity of Meadows, some moved to Nebraska, and others to Indiana. The minister himself, Rev. Simon Baechler, moved to Fairburg, Illinois, seven miles farther away from the meeting place. While the Weston congregation was thus decreasing the Meadows community was increasing in the number of Mennonite people. These two places, Weston and Meadows, are about ten miles apart. In 1891 the meetings at Weston School were closed. A number of the Meadows Amish or Mennonites had been members of the Weston Congregation. After the second place of meeting was chosen at Jacob King's district school in 1878, the Meadows people attended meetings there and later on helped to build the Flanagan Mennonite Church.

Owing to the long distance to church, early in the year 1889 they started Sunday School in the Meadows district school building. In the early spring of 1891, a number of Mennonites residing in the vicinity of Meadows met at the home of Andrew Vercler for the purpose of making plans to build a church. For some time before, church services had been conducted occasionally by different ministers of the Stuckey churches. Occasionally one from the Amish-Mennonites would fill the pulpit. Several sites were offered for a new church. An acre of land three quarters of a mile north of Meadows was finally chosen by vote and given as a donation by Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Rocke. A building committee composed of Jacob Rocke, Jacob Engle, and Joseph Kinsinger was elected. They were at the same time the trustees. A committee to solicit funds was composed of Andrew Vercler, Andrew Beller, and Jacob Rocke. The contract was let to Frank Kent of Gridley. The total cost of the building and furniture was $1,379.25, which was raised by donation. The new church was dedicated on June 21, 1891 with the following ministers present: Rev. David Augspurger and Michael Kinsinger of Washington; Rev. Joseph Zehr and Stephen Stahly of Flanagan; and Rev. Peter Schantz of Carlock, Illinois. The week following the dedication of the church it was cleared of all debts. On August 31 the first communion services were conducted by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. The church being without a permanent minister, Andrew Vercler and Joseph Kinsinger were chosen by vote and ordained by Stuckey. In October, 1897, they were ordained as elders of the church by Stuckey. Sunday School and church services were held regularly every Sunday. During the year 1908 the church was moved to its present location south of Meadows on a site donated by Rev. Andrew Vercler. The church was remodeled, enlarged, and was rededicated in January, 1909. The first building was twenty-eight by forty feet but after being moved was enlarged to forty by fifty feet, with a seating capacity of about three hundred. From the sixty members the church had when it was organized it has grown to about two hundred. Aaron Roszhart was ordained in 1916 and went to Iowa to take charge of a congregation. G. I. Gundy is the active pastor at present.

East White Oak Mennonite Church[6]

The East White Oak Church, once referred to as the East Mennonite Church in contrast to North Danvers as the West Mennonite, was an outgrowth of the latter. The North Danvers Church had in 1892 many members who were located in the vicinity of Yuton, Kerrick, and as far north as Hudson. Some members were living along the Mackinaw river, six miles northwest of Hudson. All these

---

[6] Information for this church from George L. Kirchner, Peter Schantz, Daniel Augustin, and Emanuel Troyer; all at one time or another members of the East White Oak church, Carlock, Illinois.

Mennonites were compelled to travel long distances to attend church. A Sunday School was organized in 1891 in Maple Grove School house two miles northwest of the present church with sixty members. Through it sentiment crystallized for the new church. In 1892 Rev. Peter Schantz, living near Congerville, one of the ministers of the North Danvers Church, who had been thinking of going to Iowa, instead took up the task of uniting and organizing all the members residing in the above named localities. The result was that in 1893 a church house in charge of Daniel Augustin, Joseph King, Jacob Schad, Manassas Troyer, and John Ropp was constructed eight miles north—northwest of Bloomington, Illinois, on a large and beautiful lot donated by Ropp. This building was dedicated on January 22, 1893 with a membership of fifty-seven. Some of the charter members were: Peter Schantz, Jacob and Joseph Schad, Joseph, Samuel, and Peter King, Emanuel and Manassas Troyer, Daniel Augustin, Christian Miller, D. J. Otto, Albert and Samuel Otto, Jacob Chrisman, Jefferson Collins, John Meyers, Valentine Birkey, John Ropp, Peter Ropp, Abraham Ummel, Michael Ramseyer, Mrs. Anna Mohr, and George L. Kirchner. Others, not of Mennonite blood, also joined. Schantz served the church until 1911 when he moved to Normal to give his attention to that congregation. Emanuel Troyer was ordained April 21, 1899. He resigned to become pastor of the Normal Church. Earl Salzman was called and licensed, and later became pastor of the Topeka Mennonite Church, where he has served since August 7, 1927. Rev. Reuben Zehr has been pastor of East White Oak since the fall of 1928. The church has two deacons formerly called "visiting brethren" and two deaconesses who are ordained for an indefinite period. The maximum membership of 355 was attained in 1918. The church house was remodeled and rededicated January 6, 1917. Aside from the regular church activities an extension Sunday School is maintained at Spring Hill. It was opened by Peter Schantz who became interested in a group of boys who had no religious opportunities. It is at present operated as the White Oak Union Church.

Anchor Mennonite Church[7]

The Anchor Mennonite Church received its name from Anchor Township in which it is located. The first Mennonite settlers, all farmers, came about 1880 from Danvers Township believing that there were good opportunities in agriculture because the country at that time was practically new. Among the first families were David Werner, Sr., Hiram Troyer, Peter Schertz, Sr., and William Leiser. Since the country was practically new, and much of it wet and undrained, which proved disappointing, there had always been a more or less floating population. However the families named were more optimistic and persevering. This church in the beginning was made up of members of the North Danvers Church and is an outgrowth from it. Since this church is not as old as others in McLean County, it has not experienced much of the pioneer life. In the year 1884 these first families organized their first Sunday School at the Rockford School house, five miles south of the town of Anchor, with about fifty members. The Sunday School was conducted altogether in the German language. Soon after this the pastor of North Danvers Church, Joseph Stuckey, paid frequent visits to the school and held preaching service. Later arrangements were made to have preaching once a month. In the course of time the center of population having moved eastward, the place of meeting was changed in 1890 to Fairview Schoolhouse two miles farther east.

---

[7] Information from Aaron Augspurger, pastor of the Anchor Church, Saybrook, Illinois.

At that time the German language was dispensed with except for the older members, and the Sunday School was conducted in English. About fourteen families took an active interest in the school. Four years later the members requested the North Danvers pastor to organize a church. This request being granted, Aaron Augspurger was elected June 10, 1894 and has remained pastor to the present time. He is a grandson of the late Father Stuckey, and was originally a member of the North Danvers congregation. He was one of those who persuaded Father Stuckey to permit a conference. Several years later it became apparent that the congregation needed a church building. A building committee composed of Hiram Troyer, Solomon Nafziger, and Peter Schertz was appointed in 1910. The lot was donated by Hiram Troyer and is located at the northeast corner of his farm, at a crossroad six miles southeast of the town of Anchor. The building was contracted and finished in October of the same year. It is a frame building thirty by forty feet with two class rooms. New golden oak furniture was provided for the inside such as pews, pulpit stand, and class rooms. The church was dedicated December 13, 1910 by Rev. Valentine Strubhar of Washington, Illinois, and Rev. Andrew Vercler of Meadows, Illinois. The present membership of the church is sixty-two. The members are quite transient so there is little chance for growth. No evening services are held because the members have too great a distance to travel. Rev. Augspurger is retired and Rev. Roy Unzicker preaches, licensed in the fall of 1928.

Congerville Mennonite Church[8]

The Congerville Church was another outgrowth of the North Danvers congregation. It was the first church of the Amish to be established in a village. In 1890 a Union church had been established in Congerville which was organized into a Mennonite Church in 1898. The leading families were Detweiler, Lantz, Kauffman, Sharp, Naffziger, and Kohler. The Union church purchased the Oak Grove Christian Church north of Carlock and moved it to Congerville. When the Union Church was dissolved the Mennonites bought it. Most of the Union members donated their share. Joseph Schrock, Sr., a member of the Christian Apostolic or New Amish, had originally donated the land but when the Mennonites took charge they paid him fifty dollars. The building has been remodeled and enlarged. It was rededicated April 15, 1917. Lee Lantz, a native of the community and a charter member, was the minister until he went to Nampa, Idaho in 1908. George I. Gundy was placed in charge of the congregation until January 1, 1925 when he moved to Meadows to have charge of that congregation and also superintend the Old People's Home. The church was without a pastor until Reuben Zehr was installed in September, 1925. Three deacons are elected, one each year for three years. The present membership is one hundred. Since the fall of 1928 it is without a pastor.

---

[8] Information chiefly from Joseph Detweiler, Congerville, Illinois.

Bethel Mennonite Church, Pekin[9]

The Bethel Congregation near Pekin was a natural outgrowth of the East Washington church. The community had spread from Washington into the direction of Pekin. On account of the distance a Sunday School was organized at the Railroad Schoolhouse, four miles southeast of Pekin. It was at first a Union Sunday School. This, however, was not satisfactory, so it was reorganized as a Mennonite school in 1900. For five years it was carried on as a branch of the East Washington Church. Sunday School was held each Sunday and preaching once each month by D. D. Augspurger. When Augspurger moved to Nebraska, other ministers came in, chiefly Joseph Stuckey from North Danvers and Peter Schantz from East White Oak. In 1905 the church was organized through the promotion of John Sommers, Lydia and Fannie Ropp, and some of the bishops. Allen H. Miller, a farmer who had moved in from Middlebury, Indiana, was ordained, and is still the pastor. The Bethel churchhouse was erected one half mile south of the schoolhouse on an acre plot of ground which cost $200.00. The building committee was John Sommers, Benjamin Maurer, and Ithiel Ropp. The dedication was held September 2, 1905 with the following ministers present: Peter Schantz, Valentine Strubhar, John Lehman, J. N. King, Andrew Vercler and G. I. Gundy. The membership is less than a hundred. The usual activities are maintained. About 1921 a group moved to Pompeii, Michigan, where a Central Conference Congregation called Washington Center was formed.

---

[9] Information from Allen H. Miller, Pastor of the Bethel Mennonite Church, Pekin, Illinois.

Out-of-State Churches

The nine Illinois congregations treated so far, with the Pleasant View Mennonite, Aurora, Nebraska, established 1885 (the first outside the state) with Christian Rediger as pastor, the Zion Mennonite, Goodland, Indiana, established 1895 with D. D. Augspurger as pastor, and the Topeka (Indiana) Mennonite established in 1902 with John C. Lehman as pastor—twelve in all—were the charter congregations which organized the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites in 1908. Most of these were Amish churches. A few were Mennonites or had some Mennonites among their membership. The group however assumed the name Mennonite which seemed more proper in the light of desiring to be followers of Menno Simons rather than a later leader of a more limited group.

From 1908 to the present time twelve more churches and three mission congregations have been admitted to this organization.[10] Some of these churches had been established before this time while others were new ones. Those outside the state of Illinois were the Belleview Mennonite, Columbus, Kansas, established about 1880 with Samuel Mishler as pastor, the Silver Street Mennonite, Goshen, Indiana, established in 1892 with Benjamin Schrock as pastor, the South Nampa Mennonite, Nampa, Idaho, established in 1908 with Lee Lantz as pastor, the Eighth Street Mennonite, Goshen, Indiana, with A. K. Ropp as pastor, the Kouts (Indiana) Mennonite, established in 1918 with Aaron Egli as pastor, the Washington Center Mennonite, Pompeii, Michigan, established in 1924 without a resident pastor, and the Comins (Michigan) Mennonite established in 1925 without a resident pastor. With so many churches outside central Illinois the state name was dropped in 1914, making the official title, "The Central Conference of Mennonites." The churches in Illinois that have become a part of the conference since 1908 will be taken up individually in the order in which they were admitted to the conference.

Boynton Mennonite Church, Hopedale[11]

The Boynton Congregation near Hopedale is in part an outgrowth and in part a departure. Among the residents of Boynton Township, Tazewell County, Illinois there had long been residents who were communicants of the various McLean County Mennonite churches, especially North and South Danvers. While Rev. Peter Schantz was at Wayland, Iowa, engaged in evangelistic work, he met Mrs. Wittrig who had several married children living in the Hopedale community. When she bid Rev. Shantz goodbye she urged him very strongly to do something for the Hopedale people. About this same time in 1899, Albert Brenneman, living in this community, wrote to Rev. John Gingerich of the South Danvers Church asking for services in their community. Rev. Gingerich referred the matter to Rev. Peter Schantz, then pastor of the East White Oak Church. In the summer of 1900 Rev. Schantz and Rev. Gingerich held the first church service in the Brenneman school house in Boynton Township, Tazewell County. Arrangements were then made to hold services every two weeks. In the spring of 1901 a Sunday School was organized by Albert Brenneman. It was faithfully and regularly attended. On May 12th of the same spring a communion service was held in the home of Mrs. Jacobine Brenneman which was also the occasion of three baptisms, namely Mrs. Elias Naffziger, Albert Naffziger, and Jacob Litwiller. On the same day Joseph Augspurger pledged himself anew to adhere to the church and asked to be received into full membership. September 15 of the same year (1901) these communicants who had taken this first communion after a service at the school house, voted to form a new church organization and pledged themselves to stand together as such. The new organization was to be known as the Boynton Mennonite Church. On the same day it was decided to build a house of worship on land that might be bought and selected by a building committee. The building and soliciting committee were also appointed forthwith at the same meeting. The former consisted of F. A. Iutzi, A. I. Brenneman, and A. J. Naffziger, and the latter of Joseph Augspurger, D. P. Naffziger, E. C. Brenneman, Minnie

---

[10] For further information regarding the formation of the Central Conference of Mennonites see the next chapter.

[11] Material chiefly from Albert I. Brenneman, Hopedale, Illinois and the Church record book.

Naffziger, and Emilie Brenneman. One acre of land was bought from the northwest corner of C. Z. Naffziger's farm for $100.00 and the foundation laid, but the building was delayed until the spring of 1902. The house was planned by various members of the new church. The work was completed and dedicatory services held on September 14, 1902—a beautiful day. The ministers, Schantz, Lantz, Gingerich, and Augspurger, were on hand to conduct the services.

The total cost of building and land was $2,2260.83 including all furnishings. On the day of dedication this money was all paid with the exception of $700; $400 of the debt was paid in 1904 and the remaining $300 in the spring of 1906. The charter members numbered thirty, some of whom had separated from the Hopedale Amish Mennonite church of the community. The church was supplied with pastors from outside until John W. Litwiller, one of the charter members, was ordained in 1908 by Peter Schantz. Franklin Mitchell, a student at Witmarsum Theological Seminary, Bluffton, Ohio, served the church at various times until October, 1925 when he was located there as pastor. The maximum membership has been about one hundred, and at present is eighty-two. Rev. Mitchell left for Dayton, Ohio, September 1, 1927. Rev. Ernest Hostetler, the present incumbent, assumed the pastorate in December, 1927.

The activities of this church are preaching service and Sunday School in the morning and Christian Endeavor as the evening services. The Christian Endeavor Society was organized June 2, 1912, through the efforts of Elizabeth Streid, the field secretary of the Christian Endeavor, who had been there the Sunday before. A Ladies' Aid was organized April 25, 1912. There was also some extension work done under the leadership of Aaron Egli who was a member of the congregation. He started a

Sunday School in the Oak Grove school house three miles west of Hopedale. Through these efforts a number accepted Christ and became interested in Christian work. On September 1, 1911, Mr. Egli organized a Teachers' Training Class at the school house. A two years' course was given in nine months with very creditable results. There were three conversions as a result of the course. In February, 1913, Rev. Lee Lantz held meetings in the school house with good success. Egli later moved to Kouts, Indiana.

First Mennonite Church, Normal[12]

The Normal Church was an outgrowth of East White Oak. It was the first city church to be established for this branch. A vision of the possibilities of a growing church in the city of Normal, backed by the missionary enthusiasm of Rev. Peter Schantz, senior minister of the East White Oak congregation, led to the establishing of a mission Sunday School July 24, 1910. The mission was opened by Schantz in a second story room over a store on the northwest corner of Main and Hovey Avenues.

In a short time an encouraging number of scholars were enrolled. Later the use of the school house on West Hovey Avenue was secured. The members of surrounding Mennonite churches living in Normal and Bloomington expressed a desire for the organization of a church. A committee consisting of Rev. Peter Schantz, Peter Augspurger and Samuel Kauffman was formed to solicit funds, select a location, and erect a chapel. The committee met with ready responses. A site 100 feet by 200 feet on the corner of University Avenue and Church street was purchased for $700.00 and the contract for a chapel let, the entire cost of building with furnishings being $3,650.70. It was dedicated on July 3, 1911, free of debt.

---

[12] *Central Conference Year Book,* 1924, p. 18f., and W. H. Grubb, then Pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Normal, Illinois.

From this time on regular preaching services and Sunday School were held as a mission of the East White Oak church in charge of Rev. Schantz. The congregation was fully organized on March 27, 1912, with thirty-five members. John Ropp, Albert Naffziger, and Samuel Kauffman were chosen as deacons. A Ladies' Aid Society and Christian Endeavor Society were soon organized.

A call was extended to Rev. Lee Lantz of Nampa, Idaho as pastor. He accepted and entered upon his duties May 5, 1912, on which date the first communion service was held and the congregation became a separate parish. After a pastorate of over five years, Lantz severed his relations with the church in the fall of 1917. Lee Hartzler assumed the pastorate shortly after but his health caused him to discontinue after a few months. In April, 1919, Rev. Andrew S. Bechtel accepted a call from the congregation and served until October, 1920, when he accepted a call from Pulaski, Iowa. He later returned to another Illinois church.[13] With these frequent changes of leadership and a number of members removing the church did not have the rapid growth anticipated.

Early in March, 1921, Rev. W. H. Grubb was invited to conduct a service and visit among the members. Having accepted a call he was installed as pastor on May 15, 1921. About this time a number of families living in Bloomington and Normal who were members of the surrounding Mennonite churches united with this church and identified themselves with its activities. The Conference Sunday School standard was adopted. The Duplex Envelope System was introduced for raising money for current expenses and benevolent purposes. Rev. Grubb resigned March 1, 1928 and Rev. Troyer assumed the pastorate May 1, 1928.

---

[13] See Book V, Chap. LVIII, the Summerfield Congregation.

Tiskilwa Mennonite Church[14]

Due both to distance and disturbance a church was formed out of the Willow Springs Amish-Mennonite church near Tiskilwa. Some of the members felt that the dress regulations were unnecessary, and hence dropped out of fellowship. Nevertheless they were interested in the Mennonite cause. Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Schrock invited Valentine Strubhar and J. H. King to hold meetings in the Tiskilwa Methodist Church. Evangelistic services were conducted for two weeks in the fall of 1910. Occasionally Central Conference ministers came in to hold Sunday services in the Town Hall. Perhaps as many as fifty persons would be present. On November 23, 1911, Lee Lantz and J. H. King held an organization meeting with twenty-three charter members. Two lots in Tiskilwa were purchased for $900.00. A building made of cement blocks was erected and dedicated by May 18, 1913. An all-day session was held with the following ministers taking part: Lee Lantz, J. H. King, Aaron Augspurger, Emanuel Troyer, and Mrs. Stevenson, a returned missionary. Eugene Augspurger, ordained at Meadows, was given a call. He was pastor until the fall of 1920. Since that time the pulpit had been irregularly supplied until Ernest Bohn, in school at Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois, took charge in September, 1925. The congregation at present has a membership of sixty-one.

South Washington Mennonite Church, Washington[15]

The establishment of the South Washington Church came as a result of the problem of introducing the English language into the churches. Most of the early settlers that came to Central Illinois, came from German speaking communities and most of them were German by birth. At first they had the privilege of establishing their own German private schools and teaching their children the German language, but after 1855 when the tax-supported English schools were established, the private German schools went out of existence. The children of the German Amish received all of their training in the public schools in the English language. The only German they were privileged to get was what they learned in the homes from their parents or received in the Sunday Schools. It has been noted already that the Sunday Schools in the congregation from the time of their establishment to about 1896 were German. The A. B. C. German primer was used for the children and the German Bibles for the adults. It was the children who had been taught in the public schools in the English language that urged the churches to introduce English Sunday School and English preaching. This created considerable dissension in a number of congregations largely because the ministers, who had come directly from Germany, persisted in the German language.

---

[14] Material chiefly from Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Schertz, Tiskilwa, Illinois.

[15] Information chiefly from John J. Kennel, Pastor of the South Washington Church, Washington, Illinois.

In 1889 Michael Kinsinger, who had come from Germany, was ordained to the ministry in the Washington (later known as East Washington and at present as Calvary) Church.[16] By 1892 some of the younger people of the church wanted English introduced into the church service. Rev. Michael Kinsinger was very much opposed to it. Various attempts were made by leaders of the church to persuade Kinsinger to allow English. Bishop Stuckey's records show that on April 28, 1894, and again on June 24, 1894, he with Peter Schantz went to Washington to try to settle the difficulty. Soon after Stuckey's visits the division came. Rev. Kinsinger and Rev. Christian Imhoff with a group of people sympathetic with them, organized what is now known as the South Washington Mennonite Church. It was often referred to as the German Amish Church. Meetings were held in the Greenridge school house until a church house was erected in 1895.

---

[16] See the Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington, pp. 462-467.

By 1911 Rev. Michael Kinsinger, being quite old and realizing the need of help, appealed to the Conference through Rev. Joseph Kinsinger of Meadows, Illinois. Three ministers were sent to assist the South Washington Church, Rev. Joseph Kinsinger, Rev. John Kinsinger, and Rev. J. H. King. Meetings were conducted by these brethren February 11-18, 1912, to prepare the church for the work that needed to be done. Two things were accomplished. First, a minister was ordained in the congregation. Second, the church came into the Conference. The congregation elected John Kennel. He was ordained in February, 1912, and is the present pastor. Kinsinger was not able to attend these meetings because of his feeble condition. The resolutions that were made by the church were read to him at his home and he consented to put the church in complete charge of the brethren. Michael Kinsinger died that same spring. The German has long since been discarded. This church and its parent church have been working together harmoniously for many years. The present membership is one hundred and two. The church organized a Ladies' Aid May 2, 1912.

Carlock Mennonite Church[17]

The first local organization in Carlock, Illinois that may be said to have led, or in some way contributed to the organization of a Mennonite church in Carlock, was the organization of a Ladies' Aid Society in the village in the fall of 1911 by the Mennonite women living in Carlock. These women were members of the North Danvers Mennonite Church. On September 7, 1913 a Christian Endeavor Society was organized in the disbanded Presbyterian Church. After the Christian Endeavor meetings Rev. J. H. King of the North Danvers church preached regularly each Sunday evening for a year. The Presbyterian church having been sold, the Auditorium, a public hall, was rented in January, 1914. A Sunday School was organized, with an enrollment of eighty pupils. J. H. King continued preaching regularly for exactly two years.

---

[17] Material chiefly from Rev. J. H. King and Rev. W. S. Shelly, then pastors, Carlock, Illinois.

On February 8, 1914, a committee was appointed to formulate some plan for the organization of a Mennonite Church in Carlock. Easter day, 1914, was selected as the day for formal organization of the church. A special program was arranged. Rev. William Weaver then of Goshen, Indiana, delivered morning and evening addresses. One hundred and three charter members were enrolled, including the pastor Rev. J. H. King and his wife. At a church Thanksgiving dinner in 1914, various topics were discussed in after-dinner speeches. Among these was "The advisability and the possibility of building a church." This discussion created a real interest. Early in January, 1915, at a special meeting of the congregation, the proposition of building was taken up and discussed. As a test of the possibility of putting up a building those present, without solicitation, were asked to say how much they would give toward erecting a building. The few present offered donations of $10,000. This seemed so encouraging that a building committee was appointed to make plans for a church. Christian and Lilly Meyers donated the plot of ground. On June 13, 1915, the corner stone of the church was laid, with appropriate exercises. On January 2, 1916, the completed church was dedicated, with Professor J. A. Huffman then of Bluffton, Ohio, officiating. Donations and pledges covering the cost of the church amounting to $23,000 were made. Rev. J. H. King volunteered to serve as pastor and without compensation until the church could get some one else. His active pastorate continued until June 1, 1920, when Rev. W. S. Shelly from Pennsylvania was installed as pastor. Rev. J. H. King is still identified with the church as assistant. The present membership is one hundred twenty-six.

This church has had the privilege of entertaining a number of important conferences. In 1914, it entertained the Central Mennonite Conference; in 1915 the Christian Endeavor Rally; in 1916 the All-Mennonite Convention; in 1924 the first Christian Workers' Institute; Interdenominational Peace Conferences on Armistice Day for the last four years; and the Peace Conference held under the auspices of the Conference of Pacifist Churches in the summer of 1926. Rev. Shelly accepted a call to Wadsworth, Ohio, July 1, 1927. Rev. Raymond Hartzler became his successor April 1, 1928, and is now the pastor.

CHAPTER LI

CONFERENCE FORMATION

Peter Schantz

In the course of time the younger ministers began to realize the need of closer coöperation and appealed to Father Stuckey to call a ministers' conference. Father Stuckey hesitated for some time, remembering his early conference experience, but was finally prevailed upon to permit it to be called. This first ministerial conference met in the fall of 1898, at the home of Rev. J. H. King, four miles southeast of Carlock. This conference proved of such help and inspiration to the ministers that it was unanimously decided to call a similar meeting for the following year, to meet at the mother church, North Danvers. Rev. Peter Schantz was elected chairman and Lee Lantz secretary.

This meeting was held in September, 1899 with the following ministers present: Joseph Stuckey, Peter Schantz, J. H. King, Valentine Strubhar, John Stahley, Stephen Stahley, John Kinsinger, John Gingerich, John Kohler, Joseph Zehr, Aaron Augspurger, Andrew Vercler, Emanuel Troyer, and Lee Lantz. The following laymembers were present: Joseph S. Augspurger, Martin Stahley, M. I. Ramseyer, C. W. Kinsinger, Jonathan Kauffman, John Detweiler, S. M. Stuckey, P. N. Garber, Valentine Birkey, J. W. Schertz, Hiram Troyer, Manasses Troyer, and Michael Rebholz.

At this meeting it was decided to hold an annual conference for the benefit of all the members of all the churches of like faith. This was probably the last conference that Father Stuckey attended. He did not live to see the conference organized into an official working body. His health suddenly broke in 1901. From that time he steadily grew worse, dying in February, 1902, aged 76 years. Father Stuckey had been a man of vigorous health and for forty-two years had ministered to the large North Danvers congregation. He outlived four of his assistants, whom he had been instrumental in ordaining to the ministry: Christian Imhoff, John Stahley, Joash Stutzman, also John Strubhar, who had been ordained with himself.

The conference from this time forward, and for the next few years was of the nature of Bible conference and doctrinal teaching, rather than an official conference organization. In 1907 the conference met at the East Washington Church where it was decided to organize permanently into a conference body. A committee composed of the ministers of the various churches met in December of the same year at the North Danvers church to draft a constitution. This constitution was immediately distributed among the churches for their acceptance or rejection, written notice to be given the secretary before the meeting of the next conference. During the intervening months the following churches responded:

Charter Church Location	**and Pastors**
Bethel, Pekin, Ill.	Allen Miller.
East Washington, Washington, Ill.	Valentine Strubhar
Congerville, Congerville, Ill.	Lee Lantz
East White Oak, Carlock, Ill.	Peter Schantz, Emanuel Troyer
Meadows, Meadows, Ill.	Andrew Vercler, Joseph Kinsinger
Flanagan, Flanagan, Ill.	Joseph Zehr, Stephen Stahley
North Danvers, Danvers, Ill.	Joseph H. King, John P. Kohler
South Danvers, Danvers, Ill.	John Gingerich, John Kinsinger
Anchor, Anchor, Ill.	Aaron Augspurger
Pleasant View, Aurora, Nebr.	Andrew Oesch, Christian Rediger
Zion, Goodland, Ind.	D. D. Augspurger
Topeka, Tokepa, Ind.	John Lehman

These twelve churches formed the charter membership of the conference. When the next conference met, which was held at the North Danvers church, in September, 1908, the constitution was formally and officially adopted by the conference, including the twelve churches above named, and thus was born the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites, which in 1914 changed its official name to "The Central Conference of Mennonites."[1]

The following table[2] lists the Central Conference Churches for 1925:

Church	Location	Pastors	Origin	Admission	Membership
		CHURCHES IN ILLINOIS			
North Danvers	Danvers	William B. Weaver	1852	chart.	220
Danvers	Danvers	H. Nunemaker, J. Kinsinger, J. Gingerich	1859	"	62
Calvary	Washington	Benj. Esch, Valentine Strubhar	1866	"	354
Meadows	Meadows	G. I. Gundy, Andrew Vercler	1890	"	203
Flanagan	Flanagan	J. B. Zehr, Emanuel Ulrich	1878	"	94
Anchor	Anchor	Aaron Augspurger	1894	"	68
East White Oak	Carlock	E. Troyer, Earl Salzman	1892	"	346
Congerville	Congerville	Reuben Zehr	1896	"	96
Bethel	Pekin	Allen H. Miller	1905	"	83
Boynton	Hopedale	J. W. Litwiller, Franklin Mitchell	1901	1910	67
South Washington	Washington	J. J. Kennel	1895	1912	136
Normal	Normal	W. H. Grubb	1910	1912	86
Tiskilwa	Tiskilwa	Ernest Bohn	1911	1912	62
Carlock	Carlock	W. S. Shelly, J. H. King	1911	1914	143
		CITY MISSIONS			
Home Chapel	Chicago	E. T. Rowe	1909	1909	53
Gospel Mission	Peoria	Jacob Sommer	1914	1914	90
Twenty-sixth Street	Chicago	A. M. Eash	1910	1923	61
		OUT-OF-STATE CHURCHES			
Pleasant View	Aurora, Nebr.	Eugene Augspurger	1895	chart.	68
Zion	Goodland, Ind.	Peter Nafziger	1896	"	74
Topeka	Topeka, Ind.	Ernest Hostettler	1902	"	102
South Nampa	Nampa, Ida.	Lee Lantz	1908	1910	61
Silver Street	Goshen, Ind.	Allen Yoder	1892	1911	228
Eighth Street	Goshen, Ind.	I. R. Detweiler	1913	1913	194
Kouts	Kouts, Ind.	Aaron Egli	1918	1918	24
Belleview	Columbus, Kans.		1880	1920	25
Washington Center	Pompeii, Mich.		1924	1924	20
Comins	Comins, Mich.		1925	1925	22
Warren Street	Middlebury, Ind.				
Maple Grove	Topeka, Ind.				

Since the preliminary meeting of ministers was held at the home of Rev. J. H. King near Carlock in the fall of 1898 with Joseph Stuckey presiding, conference sessions have been held annually as follows:[3]

---

[1] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XI, December, 1921, No. 12, p. 283.

[2] *The Year Book of the Central Conference of Mennonites,* 1926, p. 35, with a few changes and additions.

Year	Church	President	Secretary
1899	North Danvers	Aaron Augspurger	Lee Lantz
1900	North Danvers	Peter Schantz	Lee Lantz
1901	East White Oak	John Kinsinger	Lee Lantz
1902	East Washington	No record	Lee Lantz
1903	Flanagan	No record	Lee Lantz
1904	South Danvers	No record	Lee Lantz
1905	Meadows	No record	Lee Lantz
1906	East White Oak	Emanuel Troyer	Aaron Augspurger
1907	East Washington	J. P. Kohler	Aaron Augspurger
1908	North Danvers	J. P. Kohler	Aaron Augspurger
1909	Aurora, Nebraska	Allen Miller	Aaron Augspurger
1910	Flanagan	Emanuel Troyer	Aaron Augspurger
1911	Meadows	John Lehman	Aaron Augspurger
1912	East White Oak	J. H. King	Milo P. Lantz
1913	South Washington	J. H. King	Milo P. Lantz
1914	Carlock	J. H. King	Milo P. Lantz
1915	Silver Street, Goshen	Emanuel Troyer	Milo P. Lantz
1916	East Washington	Emanuel Troyer	Milo P. Lantz
1917	Boynton, Hopedale	Emanuel Troyer	Milo P. Lantz
1918	North Danvers	Allen Miller	Milo P. Lantz
1919	Bethel, Pekin	Allen Miller	Milo P. Lantz
1920	Flanagan	Allen Miller	Milo P. Lantz
1921	Aurora, Nebraska	Allen Miller	Milo P. Lantz
1922	Meadows	Allen Miller	Benjamin F. Esch
1923	East White Oak	Allen Yoder	Benjamin F. Esch
1924	Congerville	Allen Yoder	Benjamin F. Esch
1925	Silver Street, Goshen	Allen Miller	E. W. Rediger
1926	Calvary, Washington	Allen Miller	E. W. Rediger
1927			
1928	Maple Grove, Topeka	Allen Miller	E. W. Rediger
1929	Normal	Allen Miller	Allen Yoder

In faith the Central Conference Mennonite Church believes in those doctrines that have been held in common by evangelical Protestants since the Reformation. They also hold the historic essential principles of Mennonitism. Since the essential principles of Mennonitism are the responsibility of the individual and literal interpretation and obedience of the Bible it cannot be said that the Mennonites of Europe and America ever formulated any philosophical confession of faith. The Amish, however, from whom this conference originated, accepted the confession of faith consisting of eighteen articles which were drawn up by the Conference of Dutch Mennonites held at Dortrecht, Holland, April 21, 1632. This confession of faith was signed by fifty-one representatives from Mennonite congregations in Holland and Northwestern Germany. In 1660 it was accepted by the churches of Alsace and the Palatinate. It became the accepted confession of faith for the early Mennonite church in America. The Central Conference Mennonite Church accepted this confession of faith with a few slight revisions at the time of its organization in 1908.

---

[3] *Year Book of the Central Conference of Mennonites,* 1925, p. 20, with a few changes and additions.

In the constitution of the Central Conference of Mennonites the purpose of the Conference is stated as follows: "The endeavor of this Conference shall be to unite all congregations of like faith. The purpose of this union shall be with God's gracious help to establish and strengthen by mutual instruction and admonition from the Word of God, to carry on the work of evangelism, to spread and establish the Kingdom of God, and to enter into the work of home and foreign missions." In Article III, the principle of the Conference is stated. After quoting II Tim. 3:16, 17 it states: "This Conference shall recognize God's Word as final authority in all matters of church government and requires of those congregations which would unite with it that they stand upon a Scriptural confession of faith and that they adhere to the doctrines accepted by the Conference." Article V, Section 4, states: "If any congregation of the Conference shall habitually and after being properly dealt with shall still refuse, it shall be excluded from having a voice in the Conference."

The Central Conference Mennonite Church believes in the congregational form of church government. The annual conferences that are held are for the purpose of unifying the work of the Conference, to give encouragement to the various congregations and to report on work done throughout the year. The Conference is not a legislative body. It is representative in its organization. The delegate body is composed of lay delegates and ministers. The lay delegates may be men or women. Article VI of the constitution provides that each congregation shall have a right to be represented at the conference by one vote for every thirty communicant members or fractional part of that number. All ministers are delegates.

The theology of the Central Conference Mennonite Church is soundly conservative. Emphasis is placed on the literal interpretation of the Bible. The theology of the church has been largely Biblical. The leaders of the church have never spent much time or effort in any philosophical interpretation of the doctrines they hold. The doctrines are supported with numerous Scripture references and are largely literal in their interpretation. The church has spent considerable time in an emphasis on the spirit of unity, good will, and right living.

In doctrine this branch differs little from the main body of Mennonites. It observes feet-washing in connection with the communion service. In practice it is more liberal, especially in dress. The women are permitted to wear hats instead of bonnets. In fact no restriction is placed upon clothing. Musical instruments are used in the church services. Most of the churches have choirs or at least have no objection to them. Some of the church houses have stained glass windows. In their various activities the congregations have largely adopted modern church methods.

The leadership of the church was passed on from Rev. Joseph Stuckey, who died in February, 1902, to Rev. Peter Schantz. Since Schantz was the outstanding leader of the Central Conference Mennonite Church for a quarter of a century (1896-1921), both in the establishment of the new churches and also in the missionary work of the church, it is fitting that his biography should be given in detail.[4]

Peter Schantz was born near Congerville, Illinois, in Woodford County, April 14, 1853. His parents, Jacob and Catherine Deiss Schantz, came from Hesse Darmstadt, Germany, to America on their wedding trip. Jacob Schantz was born about 1822 and Catherine Deiss about 1824. They with their father's family of three boys and two girls had come to America about the year 1847 and had settled on a farm near Congerville. They lived in an old log cabin with two rooms until December, 1863, when they built a new house.

In April, 1864, Schantz's father died, and in September, 1866, his mother also died, leaving him an orphan at the age of twelve. He was now thrown upon his own resources to make his way in life. He was the second child in the family and so did not receive help from older brothers and sisters. The oldest in the family was his sister, Barbara, who later married Rev. Stephen Stahley. His school advantages were very meager, and he received only a few months of schooling each year. After the death of his mother he was taken into the home of Rev. Christian Imhoff who cared for him until he was twenty. In 1872, at the age of nineteen, he was baptized by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and became a member of the North Danvers Church. This was the first year of the newly organized church at North Danvers.

On December 23, 1875, he married Anna Kinsinger, a daughter of Rev. Michael Kinsinger, and settled on his father-in-law's farm which he purchased in 1877. In the winter of 1892 he moved to the White Oak district. Here he lived on a farm until August 15, 1910, when he moved to Normal, Illinois. The following children were born: Florence (Mrs. Patton), Arthur, Lesta (Mrs. Patton), and Mrs. Ira Troyer. He was remarried in 1910. He died in Normal at the home of his son, July 24, 1925, aged 72 years.

---

[4] "Rev. Peter Schantz" by Emanuel Troyer in *Year Book of the Central Conference,* 1926, p. 15.

In 1882 Peter Schantz was called to the ministry in the North Danvers Church and was ordained by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. Up to this time the North Danvers Church had had older men as ministers such as Rev. John Strubhar, Rev. Joseph Stuckey, Rev. John Stahley, Rev. Christian Imhoff, Rev. Joseph Stalter, Rev. Michael Miller and Rev. Jacob Miller. Stuckey, feeling the need of younger men in the ministry, appealed to the congregation who elected two young men, Joash Stutzman and Peter Schantz.

Thus for the first time younger men were called to the ministry. Schantz was only twenty-nine years old. Stutzman died in 1891, by which time most of the older ministers had died, so Schantz became Stuckey's assistant pastor. As a minister he soon manifested his ability of leadership. As Father Stuckey was getting old he naturally became the leader of the church. In the early years of his ministry he spent a great amount of time in evangelistic work with very good results. In 1900 he was ordained as a bishop and thus had to deal more with the official matters of the church. In the later years of his ministry he devoted a great part of his time to extension work. He had been field secretary of the mission board for seven or eight years until 1916 when he was elected field secretary of the conference with the understanding that he devote practically all of his time to extension work. He held this office until 1921.

Being a man of broad vision and a capable organizer, he was continually seeking new places for the establishment of churches. In 1891 he was instrumental in starting a Sunday School at Congerville. In 1892 he decided to go West because he felt there were enough ministers at the North Danvers Church and he was anxious to enter new fields. Just at this time about sixty members of the mother church living in the White Oak district organized a church and urged Schantz to become their pastor. He moved to the White Oak district in the winter of 1892. In April, 1899 he ordained Emanuel Troyer as minister to assist him at East White Oak. In 1896, he organized a congregation at Congerville and in 1899 ordained Lee Lantz as minister and pastor of the church. Later when Lantz left for Nampa, Idaho, Schantz ordained George Gundy to take his place.

Next the Hessian Mennonites of the South Danvers Church living around Hopedale asked for help and so he with the assistance of Rev. John Gingerich organized a congregation at Hopedale, Illinois, September 15, 1901 and ordained John Litwiller as pastor. In 1905 he ordained Allen H. Miller as pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church. He saw an opening in Normal, Illinois, for mission work so he started a Sunday School July 24, 1910, and on March 27, 1912, organized the congregation there. He then asked the congregation to extend a call to Rev. Lee Lantz of Nampa, Idaho, who came in 1912. In 1916, Aaron Egli, who had moved to Kouts, Indiana, asked Schantz to start a church there. So after a series of meetings from October 28, to November 6, 1916, a congregation was organized there and later Rev. Aaron Egli was ordained as pastor. Schantz also aided Bishop Stuckey in the establishment of churches at Anchor, Meadows, Aurora, and Silver Street near Goshen, Indiana.

He was not only interested in the establishment of rural churches but was one of the first men in the church to encourage mission work in the city. He was one of the leaders in the foreign mission work and served on the Foreign Mission Committee from its beginning until his death. He became chairman of the Home Mission Committee when it was organized in 1908. He had much to do with establishing the Mennonite Gospel Missions in Chicago and in Peoria. After his retirement in 1921 he remained an honorary member of the Foreign and Home Mission Committees until his death.

In the 1920 conference at Flanagan, Illinois, when the time came to elect a field secretary, Schantz was again nominated for the position. He then rose and said he must decline the nomination because of age and ill-health and advised the appointment of an active younger man for the responsible position. Rev. Aaron Augspurger, in writing an appreciation of Schantz's work says[5]: "The delegates fully appreciated the situation. Rev. Schantz has always shown himself to be a man of unassuming, modest, and humble disposition which displayed itself very feelingly at this time, the delegates immediately acting upon his wishes and advice. The delegates then showed their appreciation of Rev. Schantz's long years of active service by voting to him a stipulated sum from the conference treasury. While Rev. Schantz appreciated this recognition and gift, yet there is no money or other material valuation which can properly express the value of Rev. Schantz's service to the conference and we regret to lose him from active duty." "Now that he is retiring there is probably not another man in the entire Conference who has so committed himself and all that he has to the service of the Kingdom of our Lord and to the Conference; has literally worn himself out in the work for the good of lost humanity; an indefatigable worker from the first to last who never gave up when others despaired until he saw the victory. Where is the man or woman who has the gift of vocabulary to express in terms of value and appreciation the work and worth of our dear Brother Schantz to the Conference? Who knows of the sacrifices he has made, the secret of which lies buried in his own bosom, and only known to him and his Lord. Who knows the vicissitudes of life and family cares, aside from his arduous spiritual cares which he has borne, and yet never a word of complaint, and always ready to go forward. Well might we all envy him in Christian heroism and emulate him in Christian service."

---

[5] *Christian Evangel,* January, 1921.

Emanuel Troyer who had been Schantz's assistant pastor at East White Oak and knew him intimately, perhaps indeed better than any other minister in the Conference, gives the following appreciation: "Brother Schantz was a man whose advice was sought in religious and business matters, a man with a broad vision for the Mennonite Church and a born organizer." "While Brother Schantz was a man of decision, and persistency in that which he knew was right, he was also a kind-hearted, generous, sympathetic friend. He never turned a deaf ear to anyone who came to him in trouble. He always tried to look at a situation from the viewpoint of the other person. His every act was for the cause he loved so well. No one will ever know how much good he did for others. His life was lived for others and his delight was to call upon sinners to repent and accept Christ and hundreds of them did so in response to his earnest appeal. The consciousness of being able to relieve some one who was suffering, or of performing a kind deed, was the only reward he craved. I deem it a distinct honor to have been his close personal friend. I never had a friend who was easier to love, safer to trust, or worthier to honor. His association was a benediction, his life an inspiration, and his memory a heritage. In the passing of this great man, the church has lost an invaluable leader and every acquaintance a friend hard to replace. He was prepared to enter the portals of his eternal home. He spoke often and confidently of the passing from this life to the next. His trust was unwavering, and the service which he rendered to God and his fellowmen was spontaneous and complete. His example was helpful to young and old alike. His Christlike qualities shine like the sun at noonday, and his memory will remain a perpetual benediction throughout coming generations. We shall meet him in the great beyond."

CHAPTER LII

THE CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The Annual Church Conference is held the latter part of August or early September, in recent years in a tent, and is composed of the ministers and one delegate for each thirty members. Various local congregations act as host to the conference. The delegates are lodged in the homes of the local people. The delegate sessions transact the business that comes before the conference. The routine consists of committee and officers' reports such as the treasurer, the field secretary, the mission board, the publication board, education, relief, Old People's Home, Sanitarium, and Orphanage. The officers, board members, and committeemen for the various activities are appointed or elected. Usually a number of resolutions are passed. New problems come up that must be dealt with. New activities or methods may be introduced for discussion. The conference draws large crowds. Aside from the delegates who attend the business sessions there are many others who come for the program which consists chiefly of inspirational addresses bearing upon some phase of conference work or upon Christian living in general. The programs of the Ministerial Association, the Sunday School Association, and the Christian Endeavor Union are also held at the time of the annual conference. Junior and Intermediate Christian Endeavor sessions are included. Occasionally a special delegate session is called to meet usually in connection with some other meeting at which many of the delegates would be present anyway. Until 1908 merely a one day session was held, then a second day was added. In 1911 it became a three day session and a few years later extended to four.

The Ministerial Association, composed of the ministry of the Central Conference, was organized in 1911. Its purpose as stated by Peter Schantz was to discover methods of handling local church difficulties, ordination of young men to the ministry, and advisory work in relation to the conference. In 1925 it was decided to hold quarterly meetings. One session is held at the time of the Annual church conference. The last few years the Ministerial Association has held inspirational meetings open to the public on the evening of the day when the delegates' session met at the conference. Another meeting is to be in the nature of a ministers' outing for the purpose of developing the social life of the ministers. In the summer of 1924 a number of ministers had spent a day by the river. As a result of this meeting another ministers' outing was held on July 27th. Fourteen ministers with their families were present. It was decided at this meeting to make the outing an annual occasion, placing it under the jurisdiction of the Ministerial Association. The other meetings are for the purpose of discussing ministers' problems and suggesting better methods of church work. One of the important committees of the Ministerial Association is the Ordination and Installation Committee. It helps congregations to supply the pulpit, encourages young men to enter the ministry, and ordains and installs pastors in various congregations.

The first Sunday School in the Central Conference Mennonite Church was started by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and Rev. Jonathan Strubhar in the Strubhar school house about 1867. The Sunday School was started in the schoolhouse because there was considerable opposition by some of the older people to having Sunday School in the church house. In the summer of 1869, however, the first Sunday School was held in the Yoder church house at the Rock Creek Fair Grounds. In the same year the Amish also started a Sunday School in the Grant schoolhouse in Dry Grove Township. A Sunday School was also started in the East Washington district by Peter Stuckey about 1868. As noted in the history of the congregations the origin of the congregation can often be traced to the establishment of a Sunday School in the community. This was true of such congregations as Bethel at Pekin, Meadows, Anchor, Kouts and others. In some of the congregations Sunday Schools were started with the establishment of the congregations. The first Sunday School session to be held in connection with the morning church service was at the North Danvers Church about 1875.

From the beginning in 1867 to about 1890 all the Sunday Schools were conducted in the German language. The older people used the German Bible while the younger people and the children used the German A B C Primer. The reasons for the introduction of the English language have been discussed in a former chapter. It should be said here, however, that in a number of the congregations there was considerable difficulty in making the transition. In some of the congregations it was necessary to hold the English Sunday School in the afternoon rather than in connection with the preaching service. In others the English was introduced by forming one class in the school and then gradually the other classes took it up. With the introduction of the English language, lesson helps were also introduced. Many of the Sunday Schools first used a series of printed Bible lessons published by the Mennonite Publishing Co., at Elkhart, Indiana, under the direction of Rev. J. F. Funk. About 1905 the International Sunday School Quarterly was introduced into the Conference. There are still a few congregations at present in which a class or two use German material.

Modern methods of Sunday School work were adopted later on, such as the departmental organization as early as 1909, the use of Graded Lessons as early as 1906, the introduction of Teacher Training Classes by 1905 and organized Bible Classes by 1908. In 1917 a number of the congregations remodeled their church buildings to provide for a basement and class rooms for Sunday School work. In the 1922 conference the Church decided to use the Sunday School supplies published by the Mennonite Publishing House at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, which are furnished the Sunday Schools through the Central Mennonite Publication Board.

The rapid progress of the Sunday School work after 1890 and the introduction of modern methods created a need for closer coöperation and for meetings to discuss common Sunday School problems. Through the suggestion of the East White Oak Church under the leadership of Rev. Schantz and Rev. Troyer as ministers and Daniel Augustin as Sunday School worker, a meeting of the Sunday School workers of the Conference was called to meet at the East White Oak Church September 13, 1889. At this meeting it was decided to have another one the next year. September 2, 1897, the second meeting was held at the East Washington Church. Here it was decided to have Sunday School Conferences yearly. The third Sunday School Conference was held at Flanagan June 2, 1898. By 1900 the Sunday School meetings were held in connection with the church conference. This has continued until the present time. A morning and afternoon session at the time of the church conference is devoted to Sunday School work.

Soon after 1900 a Sunday School Association was organized with a president, secretary and various departmental officers. At the present time this association has a President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and the following departmental officers: Elementary, Young People's, Cradle Roll, Missionary, Temperance, and Home Department Superintendents. This forms the Executive Committee which is to look after the Sunday School work in the Conference throughout the year.

In the conference of 1914 held at Carlock, Illinois, September 9th, a resolution was passed at the delegates' session to adopt a Sunday School Standard. The committee appointed to work out the Standard was Rev. Lee Lantz, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. Valentine Strubhar. The Sunday School Standard suggested by this committee was adopted at the 1915 conference held at Silver Street Church, Goshen, Indiana, August 25, 1915. These Standards were later printed by the Central Mennonite Publication Board and are placed in the Sunday School rooms of a number of the Sunday Schools throughout the Conference. In the church conference at Meadows in 1922 the delegates' session approved of having Sunday School delegates' meetings at the conference. Such a session was held at the 1923 conference at East White Oak. A new Sunday School Standard was adopted August 30, 1929 at the conference at Normal, Illinois. These Sunday School delegates' sessions have been discontinued for reasons unknown to the writer.

The Sunday School department report[1] for 1924 was as follows: "This report includes all but two of the twenty-seven schools in the conference, those of Nampa, Idaho and Comins, Michigan. Total enrollment, 3340; number of officers, 205; number of teachers, 256; average attendance, 2024; number uniting with the church, 118; contributions to missions, $3,169.36; amount to other purposes, $2,429.20; total, $5,598.56. Two schools give all their contributions through the church. Teachers' meetings are held in five of the schools: Carlock, East Washington, Mennonite Gospel Mission (62nd and Carpenter St., Chicago), Mennonite Gospel Mission (Peoria), and Pleasant

---

[1] *Year Book of the Central Conference,* 1925, p. 20.

View. There have been only two Teachers' Training Classes held, these being at Tiskilwa and Normal. Twelve schools report having adopted the conference Sunday School Standard: East White Oak, Bethel, Carlock, East Washington, Eighth Street Goshen, Gospel Mission Chicago, Pleasant View, South Washington, Tiskilwa, Zion, North Danvers, and Normal. There are Home Departments at East White Oak, Carlock, Danvers, Eighth Street of Goshen, Meadows, Gospel Mission of Chicago, Tiskilwa, North Danvers, Congerville, and Normal. East Washington reports officers appointed for Teachers' Training Class and Home Department but not functioning. Silver Street has a Home Department but does not report number of officers or members. There are 24 Home Department officers and visitors with 135 members reported."

The Christian Endeavor Society, like the Sunday School, was an organization which was borrowed from other denominations. It is significant to note that only eleven years after the first Christian Endeavor Society was organized in the United States, the first one was organized in the North Danvers Church in the year 1892. Mr. Eli Sharp, then of Congerville, Illinois, who had come in touch with Christian Endeavor work while living in Minnesota, was largely responsible for organizing the first society in the North Danvers Church. This one was soon followed by societies in other congregations. As new congregations were established after 1892 they organized Christian Endeavor Work. The first societies in the congregations had very little organization. In fact some of them were rather Bible Reading meetings with practically no organization.

In the 1911 conference a Field Committee was appointed to visit all of the Christian Endeavor Societies and to report at the next conference. There were five members on the committee and they visited nine societies. They discovered that there were a number of the congregations that were not having any Christian Endeavor work. They found that societies were poorly organized and were in great need of help. About this time a field secretary was appointed to visit the various societies and give them the needed help. Miss Elizabeth Streid who had been a worker at the Home Chapel in Chicago was chosen as field secretary. To her must be given a great deal of credit for better Christian Endeavor work in the Conference. She visited the various societies throughout the Conference and helped them to organize and to establish real Christian Endeavor work. She went to Indiana in October, 1911, and was instrumental in starting Christian Endeavor Societies in the congregations there.

Largely through the efforts of Miss Streid the first Christian Endeavor Rally was held at the East White Oak Church July 19, 1913. These Rallies have been held every year in the months of May, June, or July. The first Christian Endeavor Rally in Indiana was held July 16, 1916, at the Silver Street Church. The Conference at present is divided into two districts, Illinois and Indiana, for the holding of these Rallies.

From year to year, to 1913, subjects relating to Christian Endeavor work were placed on the conference program. In the conference of 1913 the first Christian Endeavor delegates' meeting was held. At this meeting it was decided to draw up a Christian Endeavor Constitution, providing for a Christian Endeavor Union. Permission of the Conference Program Committee was also requested to make their own programs for the conference. Both these requests were granted them and in 1914 the constitution was accepted and the Christian Endeavor Union was formed. The Union has an Executive Committee composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary-

Treasurer, Junior Superintendent, Intermediate Superintendent and Field Secretary. This committee is to direct the work of the Christian Endeavor throughout the year. Mr. Lyle Strubhar of Washington, Illinois, is president and Miss Clara Kinsinger of Meadows, Illinois is secretary-treasurer at the present time (1926). There are twelve societies in the Union at present with a membership of seven hundred and ninety-four.

In 1917 it was decided by the Union to use the regular Christian Endeavor topics of the United Society of Christian Endeavor. In the Church Conference of 1922 the Central Mennonite Publication Board recommended that the Sunday School notes should be omitted in the *Evangel* and more space be given for Christian Endeavor notes; also that a committee of five be appointed to go over the Christian Endeavor notes. Christian Endeavor editors have been appointed from year to year to discuss the topics in the church paper.

The first Ladies' Aid Societies in the Conference were organized about the year 1909. They originated very largely as a result of the city mission work. The Home Chapel in Chicago appealed to different congregations for help in feeding and clothing the poor. These societies were organized to supply this need. They operated independently in the various congregations until the time of the 1925 conference. There are twenty societies in the Conference. These societies have a large field of service inasmuch as they supply the various institutions and home and foreign missions with food and clothing. They have also done a great deal in the support of the activities of the congregation.

In the 1925 delegates' session held September 1st an appeal came from the ladies that there should be a more effective Ladies' Aid organization throughout the Conference. A motion was then made that a committee be appointed to formulate plans for such an organization. The committee elected was Mrs. Emanuel Troyer, president, Mrs. S. E. Maurer, secretary-treasurer, Mrs. L. D. Hartzler, and Mrs. W. B. Page. This committee has arranged the work in such a way that each institution is supported for a particular month with food and clothing by a particular congregation. The secretary visited the various institutions and received a list of the needs of each. This organization has had one year of existence and thus far has proved itself to be a very great success. The purpose of the organization is to unify the work of the societies and to encourage the organization of new ones.

In the first year's work of the Conference Ladies' Aid there was a great deal of pioneering that needed to be done. After the work was started the secretary realized that there had been no provisions made for the financial support of the work of the organization. The committee found it necessary to borrow money. Mrs. S. E. Maurer, the secretary, first asked the local aid societies for donations. Various individuals gave liberally after the work was explained to them.

This organization also wished to do something for the foreign field. They wished to create a fund with which to purchase cloth for the foreign mission work. By January 18, 1926, through the $100 gift of Mrs. C. W. Kinsinger of Danvers, Illinois, $129 was raised for this work. A bale of good heavy blue denim, such as the African natives like, was bought and sent to Africa. This meant a great deal to the foreign mission work since the cloth is one of the primary needs of the natives. This to the mind of the missionary solves a very difficult problem in the Congo from the fact that it sufficiently clothes the native so that he will work for the mission and not go to an ungodly training company to buy his cloth.

There were a number of causes that led to the organization of a Christian Workers' Conference. In the first place the Church Conference itself, being organized in 1907-08, began to do more systematic work and carry on more organized activities; in the second place the work itself expanded and required more and better trained workers. Sunday Schools were introducing departmental work, and more modern methods of conducting the Sunday School and Christian Endeavor Societies were being organized throughout the church. This development of the work and the increasing need of more workers created a desire on the part of the leaders for more united efforts on the part of Christian workers in the different congregations. On the other hand the conditions created by the World War brought discouragement to a number of the younger Christian workers.

Rev. Allen Miller, while president of the Church Conference in 1917, appointed a committee composed of Rev. J. H. King, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, and Rev. Aaron Augspurger to prepare a program having in mind the needs of the Christian workers. The first Christian Workers' Conference was held December 31, 1917, to January 4, 1918, at the Normal Mennonite Church, Normal, Illinois, in connection with the Mission Board until 1925.

The Christian Workers' meeting held at Carlock, Illinois, January 11-18, 1925, marks the transition from the Christian Workers' Conference to the Christian Workers' Institute. In this year the last Christian Workers' Conference was held and the first Institute. The ministers of a few of the congregations surrounding the Carlock Mennonite Church met and arranged a program for a Christian Workers' Institute. It was suggested that it be held at the time of the Christian Workers' Conference and Mission Board meeting. This was approved by the Conference and so the Institute was given the forenoon sessions and the Christian Workers' Conference and Mission Board the afternoon and evening sessions, of Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the week. The first Institute was a great success. The first day opened with an attendance of fifty and by Friday the attendance had increased to one-hundred eighty-nine.

This Institute better meets the needs of the workers, and so has replaced the Christian Workers' Conference. The chief difference in the two meetings lies in the fact that in the Christian Workers' Conference the meetings are entirely inspirational with no attempt at giving definite instruction or systematic teaching. The purpose of the Institute is to give courses of study in Bible, Music, Christian Endeavor work and Missions. It is a training school for workers who are not privileged to attend colleges and seminaries. This type of meeting seemed to supply a felt need in the Conference and so in the 1925 conference at Silver Street, Goshen, Indiana, the question of Institutes was discussed at the delegates' session held September 1st. A motion was then made that a committee be appointed to organize and conduct Institutes throughout the Conference and also to make plans for the promotion of mission work. This committee met at the Twenty-sixth Street Mission, Chicago, September 25, 1925. They divided the Conference into the following six districts according to the location of the churches: one—Silver Street, Eighth Street, and Topeka; two—East White Oak, Carlock, Normal, North Danvers, Danvers, and Congerville; three—Calvary, South Washington, Peoria, and Pekin; four—Meadows, and Flanagan; five—the two missions in Chicago; six—Goodland, and Kouts. Special provision was made for the churches that were too far from any others to be included in a district. Arrangements were made by which these churches could hold two or three-day Institutes as individual congregations. This movement which had been inaugurated by a few interested individuals became a conference movement. In the autumn of 1925 Institutes were held in districts two and three.

The first publication work of the Conference was the publishing of the church paper called the *Christian Evangel.* For a number of years, especially after 1905 when the Conference began foreign mission work, Rev. Peter Schantz urged the publication of a church paper. He had urged Rev. Aaron Augspurger to take up the matter but Augspurger did not feel that he was capable of doing it. This was before the Home Mission work started in Chicago in 1909.

In 1909 Rev. A. B. Rutt came into the Conference and was appointed as superintendent of the Home Chapel in Chicago. He had been interested for a number of years in publishing a paper particularly for young people. The mission work in Chicago was opened in June, 1909. In the 1909 church conference held at Aurora, Nebraska, September 22nd and 23rd, the question of a church paper came up at the delegates' session. This was the first delegates' session held at the conference. The proposal of a church paper met with a general approval and the delegates voted that one should be printed. Rev. Augspurger and Rev. Rutt were appointed to establish the paper and to determine its possibility by the time of the 1910 conference. The plans for the church paper were presented at a Mission Board meeting held at Bloomington May 25, 1910. The Board approved of such a step but was not in a position to sanction it officially. Rev. A. B. Rutt who had experience in publication work was made the editor. He suggested the name "Christian Evangel."

The first issue of the *Evangel* appeared in July, 1910. This and the issues of August and September, were published by Rutt from the Home Chapel in Chicago. The paper had not yet been made the official organ of the Conference. In the 1910 conference held at Flanagan, Illinois, September 21, 22, the Conference accepted the paper as its official organ.

The *Christian Evangel* from July, 1910 to February, 1913, had two parts: first, that published by the Mennonites and second, that under the jurisdiction of the United Religious Press, the interdenominational part of the paper. At the 1910 conference Rev. A. B. Rutt was officially chosen as the first editor. There were three departments established with three associate editors: Rev. Aaron Augspurger, doctrinal; Rev. L. B. Haigh, missionary; and Rev. Lee Lantz, educational.

The purpose of the paper may well be stated by the points emphasized by the editor in the first issue. "First, the Evangel stands for the highest type of unity. This means the unity among the ministers, Christian workers and the various congregations." This unity was even to be extended to other Mennonite groups. At one time there were representatives from five different Mennonite groups writing for the paper. In 1911 Rutt pleaded for an All-Mennonite paper and a United Publication Board. At the March 22, 1911 United Mission Board meeting Rev. Aaron Augspurger and Rev. Rutt invited the Defenseless Mennonites to coöperate. Second, the editor emphasized the value of a church paper to present the needs and achievements of Christian work, especially mission work. "Third, it shall be the purpose of the paper to uphold the doctrines of the church and finally, it is to be for the purpose of training youth for the mission field."

On January 2, 1912, a publication committee was appointed which was to look after the financial interests of the paper. In this same year a business manager was appointed to assist the editor. A book agency was established in connection with the paper. The paper was very well supported from the beginning and it was promoted by the church leaders. In 1911 Andrew Vercler traveled throughout the churches in its interests. In 1917 the publication of the *Evangel* was put in the hands of a publication board. The business manager and editor were to be on the board. By 1919 there were eight hundred subscribers to the *Christian Evangel.* Beginning with January, 1917, an attempt was made to coöperate with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ in the publication of the church paper. This not being very successful, the *Evangel* by 1918 again became the paper of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The *Christian Evangel* has been one of the most important sources for material for the Central Conference history. The following have served as editors: Rev. A. B. Rutt, July, 1910—January, 1915; Rev. Lee Lantz, February, 1915—September, 1916; Rev. Benjamin Esch, October, 1916—September, 1919; Rev. A. S. Bechtel, October, 1919—September, 1920; Rev. L. B. Haigh, October, 1920—September, 1923; Rev. William B. Weaver, October, 1923—September, 1925; and Rev. H. E. Nunemaker, since October, 1925. From 1926 on Wm. B. Weaver again assumed the position. The Central Mennonite Publication Board at the present time has charge of all the publication work of the Conference. It publishes the *Evangel,* sells books and Bibles and Sunday School supplies, and publishes the *Year Book.*

In the 1921 conference held at Aurora, Nebraska, it was decided at the delegates' session to publish a *Year Book* for the Conference. Rev. W. H. Grubb, pastor of the Normal Mennonite Church, was largely responsible for this decision. He was appointed editor and issued the first *Year Book* in 1922. In the 1924 conference it was decided that the *Year Book* should be a permanent publication. Rev. W. H. Grubb edited all of the *Year Books* up to the 1926 issue which was edited by Rev. H. E. Nunemaker, of Danvers, Illinois. Wm. B. Weaver has been the editor since 1926. The field of opportunity for the Publication Board is very great. The conference has expressed itself as favoring Conference ownership of a printing plant. This, with a bookstore, is the greatest need of the Central Conference Mennonite Publication Board to-day.[2]

Besides the activities which have been enumerated here the conference engages in a number of others in coöperation with other branches. These were treated earlier.[3]

The following summary of the activities of 1925 will give an idea of the varied interests of the conference.[4]

> The year opened with a new movement in religious education, and throughout the year an increasing interest was manifested in that field of endeavor. The Bible Normal which was held at Carlock church from January 11 to 18 was a new venture but proved itself a means of real spiritual strength. The attendance which numbered fifty at the opening session gradually increased until it numbered over five hundred for the two closing sessions.
>
> Out of this Normal have grown enlarged plans for a series of Christian Workers' Institutes which are to convene throughout the coming winter. The Conference is divided into districts. Each will choose its own dates for the Institute.
>
> The semi-annual meeting of the Ministerial Association was held at Carlock church on the afternoon and evening of January 13.
>
> The year 1925 has been a very busy year in the work of the church institutions. On January 1, Rev. G. I. Gundy took charge at the Old People's Home at Meadows, Illinois. The Home has been well supported throughout the year. It has also been filled to capacity with homeless old people.
>
> The Mennonite Sanitarium, located at Bloomington, Illinois, has likewise been crowded to capacity much

---

[2] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XII, No. 2, February, 1922, p. 43.

[3] See Chapters XL, XLII, and XLIII.

[4] *Year Book of the Central Conference,* 1926, p. 23 ff.

of the year, making ever increasing demands on the constituency for more room. This led to the erection of a new building in 1929 at a cost of about $200,000.

The work of the Foreign Missions of the church is progressing as usual, showing substantial progress in their fields. It is hoped however, that in answer to an enlarged program for the dissemination of missionary information, more definite constructive work will become possible.

The city missions have continued with their constructive work of former years, and show encouraging gains for the year. A special effort was made by the workers of the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission, Chicago, Illinois, to keep in touch with the Sunday School pupils through the summer months. To do this a Daily Vacation Bible School was organized on June 30 and was continued for five weeks. There was a total enrollment of one hundred three children, and an average daily attendance of fifty-five. On August 11, sixty-four of the Sunday School boys and girls were taken to the vicinity of Bloomington and Washington for a period of two weeks.

The evangelistic emphasis has been strong this year. The field secretary, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, was busy throughout the year visiting the churches and conducting revival meetings. The church at Comins, Michigan was organized by the field secretary, and became a member of the Conference at the annual session. Revivals were also held by Revs. E. T. Rowe, A. M. Eash, William B. Weaver, and G. I. Gundy. There were ninety-nine received into the church by baptism during the conference year. A number of series of Bible lectures were also given at various churches which resulted in increased interest in Bible study and church work.

The year reveals marked progress in supplying vacant pulpits with ministers. On January 1, Rev. G. I.

Gundy assumed his duties as pastor of the church at Meadows, Illinois. The call was given and accepted because of the advanced years of Revs. Andrew Vercler and Joseph Kinsinger, who have so faithfully and successfully led the Meadows church for many years. On March 29, H. E. Nunemaker who had served the Danvers church for a year was ordained to full ministry. On September 6, Reuben Zehr was installed as pastor of the Congerville Church. On September 20 Ernest Bohn, formerly of Topeka, Indiana, took up his duties as student pastor of the Tiskilwa church. About October 1st Franklin Mitchell, who had been supply pastor at the Hopedale church during the summer, received and accepted a unanimous call to the pastorate of that church.

Death claimed two of the older ministers. Rev. Joseph Kinsinger, who labored faithfully for many years in the Meadows church, passed away May 8, 1925. Rev. Peter Schantz who was outstanding in the affairs of the church for many years died July 24, 1925.

The close of the year saw three of the congregations housed in new church homes. The East Washington church moved to the town of Washington, Illinois, where they erected a modern, commodious church building. The church was dedicated July 19. The dedication service was in charge of Dr. J. E. Hartzler. During the week Dr. Hartzler also conducted a series of Bible lectures at this place, to large and appreciative audiences. The church at Comins, Michigan, also erected a new church building during the summer. The building was dedicated in November, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, Allen Miller, and Allen Yoder being in charge of the service. Rev. Troyer conducted a series of revival meetings during the following week. The Washington Center church, between Pompeii and Ashley, Michigan, which was organized and became a member of the Conference in 1924, purchased the Evangelical church house which they had been using.

Marked interest was manifested in the conference work of the church. The Annual Conference which was held at the Silver Street church near Goshen, Indiana, on August 29 to September 1st, was attended by large crowds. Constructive programs of church work were planned.

The Conference coöperated in the work of the All-Mennonite Convention, which convened at Nappanee, Indiana, on September 2-3. Throughout the convention a growing spirit of coöperation and Christian unity was manifested among the different groups of Mennonites who were present.

Another successful effort at coöperation took place at the Carlock, Illinois, Mennonite church in the form of an interdenominational Armistice Day program, in which ministers of various denominations raised their voices as one against the sin of war. Large crowds were present at the sessions. It is the hope of Christians that out of such united gatherings will grow definite, constructive movements for peace which will be felt in the world.

The social side of life was not neglected during the year. The various churches and organizations within the churches had numerous social functions. Several groups of churches united for July Fourth picnics. Perhaps the largest was the picnic at the Mackinaw River north of Congerville, Illinois, which included a number of churches. There were about two hundred and fifty present. At this picnic some of the ministers discussed a long felt need of getting the ministers of the conference and their families together for a social time. Several of them had spent a profitable day in this way in 1924. The discussion resulted in a ministers' picnic at the same place on July 17. There were fourteen ministers with their families present. It was decided to make the picnic an annual occasion, including all the ministers. It was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministerial Association.

CHAPTER LIII

THE HOME MISSION WORK

The first step in the missionary work of the Central Conference Mennonite Church began at the church conference held at Meadows, Illinois, September 13-14, 1905. Two strong missionary addresses were given, one by Alma Doering, a returned missionary from the Swedish Mission in Congo Belge, Africa, and the other by Charles E. Hurlburt, President and director of the African Inland Mission. The addresses so stirred the Conference that they decided they should do something for dark Africa, but the Conference realized that organization was necessary for carrying on foreign mission work. The organization resulted in two boards, the one the Foreign Mission Board of the Conference, and the other a joint board with the Defenseless Mennonites. Since foreign work is a coöperative activity it was treated in the preceding section.[1] Only the Central Conference organization will be discussed here.

On December 1, 1905, a meeting of ministers and delegates of the different congregations was called to meet at the East White Oak Church for the purpose of organizing. After considerable discussion a motion was made that a temporary mission committee be elected to hold office until the next regular conference. The committee of three elected were: Rev. Valentine Strubhar, president; Rev. Joseph King, secretary; and S. E. Maurer, treasurer. S. E. Maurer has served as treasurer until the present time, (1926). In the conference of 1906, held at East White Oak September 13, this temporary committee was reëlected to succeed itself. This was called the Foreign Mission Committee.

---

[1] See Book III, Chapter XL, The Foreign Missionary Work.

After the establishing of home mission work in 1909 a purchasing committee consisting of Rev. Peter Schantz, John Ropp and Rev. A. B. Rutt was also elected. Up to 1909 the Foreign Mission Committee and the Home Mission Committee which was established in 1908, were independent of each other. During the 1909 conference at Aurora, Nebraska, the question of incorporating mission work was discussed in one of the delegates' sessions. It was discovered that it was necessary to incorporate to do business with foreign governments. It was decided to incorporate home and foreign work only and not the conference organization. The Home and Foreign Mission Committee were elected as a committee to secure the incorporation papers. The conference on October 13-14, 1909, was held at the Y. M. C. A. at Bloomington, Illinois. Here the home and foreign mission work was consolidated. The name of the new organization was the Central Mennonite Board of Home and Foreign Missions. Its purpose was to be evangelization, support home and foreign work, receive and hold all donations made for mission purposes. The number of members of the board at first was seven. In the 1910 conference, held at Flanagan, the delegates decided to enlarge the Mission Board to twenty-five members, fifteen members representing the fifteen congregations at that time in the conference, seven members representing the Home and Foreign Mission Committee, and three representing the Publication Board. To-day the membership of the Board is determined by representation from the congregations. At present it has three committees: the Executive Committee, consisting of President, Vice-president, Secretary and the two Treasurers from the Home and Foreign Committees; the Foreign Mission Committee; and third, the Home Mission Committee. The Foreign and Home Mission Committees do practically all of the work of the Board. Rev. J. H. King is president of the Foreign Mission Committee and also of the Board. Rev. Allen Miller is chairman of the Home Mission Committee and Rev. Andrew Vercler, treasurer. The Mission Board holds yearly meetings in the month of January. At these meetings business is transacted and an inspirational program given. It is the purpose of these meetings to inform the church concerning mission work done in the home and foreign fields and to suggest plans for future expansion. The new board with twenty-five members was reorganized on January 2, 1911, and a year later began its work.

The mission board at present is quite large since the size of the Board is determined by the membership of the congregations. There is one representative for every one hundred members and two for congregations with a membership over one hundred. All ministers are members of the board.[2]

General Home Mission Work

Just when the home mission work of the Central Conference Mennonite Church began is difficult to determine. It would depend on a definition of the term home missions. As an organized activity of the Conference it began in 1908, but before this time there was a great deal of extension work done in the home field and also money given to home mission work. In a report given of the activities of the North Danvers Church in 1892, Joseph Stuckey states that the church gave ninety dollars to home missions. The different congregations which later formed the Conference helped to support mission work in other Mennonite groups and also supported institutions of other denominations. There was also considerable home mission work done by the congregations before 1908 in the establishment of Sunday Schools in schoolhouses in various communities and also in extending the borders of the church. As stated before from the mother church at North Danvers a number of new congregations were established. Even in the early days Rev. Jonathan Yoder saw an opportunity at Washington, Illinois, to do home mission work and suggested that services be held there. Father Stuckey had a missionary spirit and a vision of extension work. He traveled over the states of Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Michigan, Kansas and Missouri in the interests of needy congregations, ordaining ministers and bishops, dedicating churches and establishing new congregations. Rev. Peter Schantz with his spirit of missionary adventure was instrumental in establishing a number of new congregations. All of this was home mission work of the church.

---

[2] *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XII, No. 1, January, 1922, p. 17.

Mennonite Gospel Mission, Chicago[8]

As an organized activity the Home Mission Committee has been responsible for the establishing of two mission stations, one in Chicago and one in Peoria, and also for taking over one station in Chicago which formerly had belonged to another Mennonite group. The first mission to be established was the Home Chapel in Chicago, now called the Mennonite Gospel Mission. The committee had been investigating a number of fields for opening city mission work. Mission records show that on May 30, 1907, the Home Mission Committee had met at Peoria, Illinois, to look for a home mission station but nothing definite was accomplished.

It was at this time when Mr. A. B. Rutt, who had been a member of the (old) Mennonite Church and had been doing mission work in Chicago for several years, offered his services to the Central Conference Mennonite Church. He was interested while yet in the old conference in the publication of a young people's paper and also in more progressive mission work in the city. He finally decided to take his church membership to what he thought a more progressive body of Mennonites and so decided to come to the Central Conference Church. He wrote to Valentine Strubhar of Washington, Illinois, expressing his desire.

---

[8] *Year Book of the Central Conference,* **1923, p. 17, ff.**

The Home Mission Committee being ready for action, held a meeting with Mr. Rutt. Peter Schantz had been interested in starting city work for a number of years. The Home Mission Committee with Rev. Allen Miller went to Chicago where with the assistance of Rev. Rutt they selected the site for the mission. On June 20, 1909, the first service was held as a Sunday School at 843 West Sixty-third Street. At this first meeting there were present the superintendent, one teacher and six pupils. A store building was converted into a chapel. The work progressed very rapidly the first year, reaching an attendance of eighty-five. Four services were held each Sunday and from two to four a week. Monthly women's meetings were held and a Home department was organized. The workers for the first year at the mission were Rev. A. B. Rutt, his parents, Anna Augspurger, Elizabeth Streid and Edna Patton who came in October, 1909.

The Home Mission Committee realized that with the growing work another place of worship must be provided for the mission. They first decided to erect a new building and on April 27, 1910, at a Board meeting held at Bloomington they decided to buy lots. These were purchased May 25, 1910, but after further investigation they found that they were able to buy a building at the corner of Sixty-third and Carpenter Streets. It was purchased in December, 1910, and in February, 1911, the mission called the Mennonite Home Chapel was moved into the new quarters. The building was raised and a heating plant installed. The Home Chapel was dedicated October 27, 1912. The purchase of the lots and also of this building was made possible by the generous gift of John and Mary Rupp of Bloomington, Illinois. They gave an initial sum of five thousand eight hundred and forty dollars and then continued gifts for the repairing of the building until it amounted to about ten thousand dollars.

The first period of mission work was 1909-14 when the mission was under the jurisdiction of the Board. During this time Rev. Rutt was ordained Bishop by Rev. Peter Schantz April 9, 1912. Miss Streid and Miss Augspurger left after a year of service and Miss Edna Patton became the wife of Rev. A. B. Rutt June 21, 1911. Rev. Jacob Sommer and wife of Goodland, Indiana, volunteered for mission work at the 1910 conference. January 1, 1911, they began mission work at the Home Chapel, particularly devoting their time to rescue work. During this period of mission work Rutt organized the following activities: Sunday School, Children's Work, Junior Christian Endeavor, Boys' Club, Girls' Industrial Work, Women's Bible Class, and Home Department. Some fresh-air work was also done, Mrs. Sommer bringing children from the mission to Goodland, Indiana, August 9, 1912. In 1913 the Sunday School had an enrollment of two hundred and thirty. It was Rev. Rutt's aim to make his mission self-supporting so that the Board could be relieved to establish other stations. On March 1, 1914, it became self-governing and self-supporting and was called the First Mennonite Church of Chicago.

The second period of mission work was from 1914-17, when the mission was independent of the Board and was a member of the Conference. During this same period considerable difficulty arose between Rutt and the church. He finally resigned to the local official board and it appealed to the Conference. On January 2, 1917, the Conference took charge of the Mission again and placed Rev. D. D. Augspurger in charge of the work. Rev. and Mrs. Sommer, who by this time were working in the Peoria Mission, returned to Chicago and took charge of the work until arrangements could be made for workers. January 3, 1918, Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Hartzler of Goshen, Indiana, took charge of the work. February 1, 1918, Miss Pearl Ramseyer of the East White Oak congregation became a worker at the Home Chapel. L. D. Hartzler left Chicago June 25, 1918, and the work was placed in charge of Rev. E. T. Rowe who had been teaching a Bible class in the mission since November, 1917. The Board officially elected Rowe as Superintendent January 7, 1919.

The work had suffered continually during the transition period. In 1919 the Sunday School only had sixty-six, and an average attendance of thirty-five. The work under the supervision of Rowe has continued to grow and a number of new features have been added. A Gospel car was purchased in 1919. With this convenience the workers are able to do considerable work in various institutions of the city such as the Cook County institution at Oak Forest or street work. An electric sign was purchased at a cost of $619.25 a few years ago which during evening and night flashes out the message, "Jesus saves." The name of the mission was changed from Home Chapel to Mennonite Gospel Mission. The membership of the church at present is fifty-six and the Sunday School enrollment one hundred and seventy-two. Rev. Rowe resigned Oct. 1, 1929.

Mennonite Gospel Mission, Peoria[4]

The second mission station to be established by the Home Mission Committee was the Mennonite Gospel

---

[4] *Year Book of the Central Conference,* 1923, p. 21, f.

Mission, Peoria, Illinois. After the Home Chapel at Chicago became self-supporting in 1914, the Home Mission Committee was attempting to locate a place suitable for another mission. After careful investigation they decided on April 20, 1914, to start work in Peoria. A call was extended to Rev. Jacob Sommer and wife to take charge of the work. Sommer had been ordained as a minister in October, 1907, and became pastor of the Zion Mennonite Church at Goodland, Indiana.

Mr. and Mrs. Sommer came to Peoria in 1914. They at once began to look for a suitable location and after making a survey of the field decided to establish the work at 920 North Adams Street in a vacant store building. The first service held was a Sunday School on the morning of July 19, 1914, with an attendance of thirty-seven. In the evening of the same day the building was dedicated. The large number present from the churches in the surrounding community added much to the encouragement of the work at this place. Miss Luella Engel of Danvers, Illinois, became a worker at the mission in April, 1915. She served the mission until September, 1920, when she left to take nurses' training at the Mennonite Sanitarium at Bloomington, Illinois.

The work at the Peoria Mission prospered from the beginning. At the end of the first year there were forty-eight members on the membership roll. The records show that December 5, 1915, there were ninety-six in attendance in the Sunday School and one hundred and five in preaching service. The mission has at present the following activities: Preaching, Sunday School work, Christian Endeavor Work, a Women's Missionary Society, Willing Workers' Society, and Mid-week Prayer Service. The Home Mission Committee decided in the latter part of 1915 to purchase a site and erect a permanent mission building. A building of veneered brick suitable for the various activities of the mission was erected in the summer of 1916 at 1001 North Adams Street and was dedicated September 10, 1916. The membership of the church at present (1926) is ninety-four and the enrollment in the Sunday School one hundred and ninety.

Twenty-sixth Street Mission, Chicago[5]

The third city mission under the jurisdiction of the Mission Committee is one that was established in 1906 by the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois and the Illinois Conference of the (old) Mennonites[6] on Twenty-Sixth Street, Chicago. It was originally an outgrowth of the Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago under the superintendency of A. H. Leaman. This mission was under the superintendency of Rev. A. M. Eash[7] from its beginning in 1906.

Eash left the mission in 1919 and spent two years in orphanage work at Jerusalem. When he returned in 1921 the work had declined considerably. He felt that the emphasis which was being placed by the (old) Mennonites on customs and practices which were foreign to city folk made it difficult for him to build up the work again. The Mission Board ([old] Mennonite) decided to sell the building and close the work. Eash and his congregation then appealed to the Central Conference Mennonites.

The first meeting of the Mission Board to consider the proposition was held April 24, 1923. In the 1923 conference held at East White Oak the Twenty-Sixth Street congregation was admitted into the conference. After considerable negotiation the Central Mennonite Mission

---

[5] *Year Book of the Central Conference,* 1924, p. 24.

[6] For a more complete discussion of the early history of this mission see Book II, Chapter XXXIII, The Twenty-Sixth Street Mission.

[7] A. M. Eash biography will be given in the biographical section at the end of the book.

Board purchased the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission building in January, 1924.

Under the administration of the Central Conference the work at the mission has again been built up and is making progress. The present membership of the church is seventy-eight and the enrollment of the Sunday School is two hundred and thirty-five. Rev. and Mrs. Eash are the workers at the Mission at present (1929).

CHAPTER LIV

THE COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

The Central Conference of Mennonites is the sixth in size of the Mennonite and Amish bodies in America.

The spirit of coöperation has been found in this branch from the days of Father Stuckey. His records reveal the fact that he was in very close touch with other Mennonite groups. He visited churches of the (old) Mennonite conferences and coöperated with some of their leaders. He was also in close touch with the General Conference of Mennonites of North America. A report of the North Danvers Church is found in the 1890 conference report of the General Conference of Mennonites. A number of the leaders of the (old) Conference and the General Conference also visited the churches which now form the Central Conference. Bishops and ministers of the (old) Conference preached in Father Stuckey's congregation and the surrounding congregations. The Middle District of the General Conference of Mennonites held its 1898 conference session in a grove a few miles from Danvers, Illinois, and was entertained by Father Stuckey's church.

In 1898 when the (old) Mennonites began mission work in India an attempt was made by the Central Conference to coöperate with them. Again when the Central Conference began foreign mission work in Africa in the period from 1905-1909, Rev. Menno S. Steiner attended a mission meeting at Meadows, Illinois, and gave a stirring missionary address. He was interested in united foreign mission work by the Mennonite groups. It seemed, however, that the time was not yet ripe for such a movement.

Another evidence of the spirit of coöperation is found in the launching of the *Christian Evangel* in 1910. It was the purpose of A. B. Rutt as editor of the *Evangel* to make it an All-Mennonite paper. A number of editorials were written in the early issues of the *Evangel* urging very close coöperation between the Mennonite groups and even suggesting a united publication board. Rutt's attitude in this matter was sanctioned and supported by the Central Conference Mission Board meeting in January, 1911. The board sanctioned Rutt's policy of using men of other Conferences as editors of various departments. At one time there were five Conferences represented on the editorial staff. At this same board meeting a definite invitation was given to the Defenseless Mennonites. In 1917 the *Evangel* was published in coöperation with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. The 1925 conference advised the members to patronize the Brotherhood Aid Association of the Defenseless Mennonites.[1] The two missions in Chicago join with the other Mennonite missions in a quarterly meeting and when the Happy Hour mission was in existence helped to support it.[2]

The church has not attempted to coöperate with only one group of Mennonites but with various groups. At the time of the yearly conferences invitation is always given to ministers of other Mennonite groups to meet in the delegates' session.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the 1924 Conference:—"The Central Conference of Mennonites are a body of Mennonites who wish to be known as being desirous of a closer fellowship and unity between the different Mennonite Conferences, independent churches and individuals who are of kindred faith; therefore be it resolved, That we heartily invite all such groups who may be of like desire to effect with us a closer coöperation through their appointed representatives."

---

[1] See Book III, Chap. XLVI, the Brotherhood Aid Association.

[2] See Book III, Chap. XLV, the Coöperative Mission Activities by the Mennonites in Chicago.

The following coöperative activities with the Defenseless Conference have been treated in the preceding section:[3] the Foreign Missionary Work (Congo Inland Mission), the Salem Orphanage near Flanagan, the Mennonite Old People's Home of Meadows. Four additional activities should be noted: Education, Relief Work, All-Mennonite Convention, and Young People's Retreat.

Education[4]

The higher educational movement in the Mennonite Church did not begin as early as mission work. The Central Conference Mennonite Church was always concerned that the children should receive an elementary education. The early settlers established their own private schools for the purpose of educating the children. But the Amish have always been conservative in regard to higher education. Living in communities where farming was done on an extensive scale they felt they needed their boys and girls as soon as they were old enough to help on the farm.

It was the missionary movement in the church which first brought the need of higher education to the minds of the church leaders. The Central Conference Mennonite Church, as all other Mennonite groups, discovered that she must get her missionaries from some training school, be it a Bible school or seminary. Practically all the missionaries that were sent to Africa received their training at the Moody Bible Institute. Most of these were not members of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The Church began to see that she must send her young people to high school, college and seminary or Bible Institute if she would have future missionaries.

---

[3] See Chaps. XL-XLIII, respectively.

[4] Chiefly from Smith and Hirschler—*The Story of Bluffton College,* and the *Christian Evangel,* Vol. XII, January and February, 1922.

The first Mennonite educational institution in which members of the Central Conference churches were interested was the (old) Mennonite school which had been established in 1895 in Elkhart, Indiana under the name of the Elkhart Institute. A number of young people from several congregations attended the institute. This attendance continued when the school was moved to Goshen, Indiana in 1903, and became Goshen College. However the attendance later fell off, and since 1914 very few have attended due to the fact that the conference became interested in the school at Bluffton, Ohio about 1910. However during the period when J. E. Hartzler was president of Goshen College, 1914-1918, several generous donations were made by wealthy individuals in the Central Conference. Had it not been for the repulse of the suggestion that the group be represented in some way on the (old) Mennonite Board of Education it is possible that friendly relations and support might have continued and increased. After the repulse however, the solicitation of support from the Bluffton College group was followed. It is interesting to note however that a number of active ministers in the Central Conference are graduates of Goshen College, namely, I. R. Detweiler, W. B. Weaver, Raymond Hartzler, Benj. Esch, H. E. Nunemaker, and Ernest Bohn. Detweiler had been acting President immediately preceding his assumption of the pastorate of the Eighth Street Mennonite Church at Goshen, Ind., and W. B. Weaver had been a member of the faculty for a number of years.

The first educational institution in which the Central Conference of Mennonites became officially interested was Bluffton College. This institution was founded in 1900 by the General Conference of Mennonites. It was owned and governed by the Middle District Conference and was called Central Mennonite College. The president, Dr. S. K. Mosiman, visited the Central Conference Mennonite Churches in the interests of the college as early as 1909 and 1910. These visits meant much in the way of encouragement to the young people to attend the institution, and also in creating interest among the Conference leaders.

During these same years there was considerable discussion among the leaders of the different groups of Mennonites in regard to a coöperative effort in Mennonite education.

Up to 1909 the various Mennonite Colleges that had been established each interested only one group of Mennonites and very little effort was made to interest Mennonites of other groups. Perhaps one of the first steps in suggesting the idea of coöperation was a letter sent by Prof. N. E. Byers, then president of Goshen College, on June 3, 1909, to the heads of all Mennonite schools and colleges, stating that Goshen was offering a full college course for the A. B. degree and asking their coöperation in interesting the graduates of their schools who desired to complete a full college course. There was no response to this letter by any of the schools.

The first step that finally resulted in coöperation was made by Pres. N. E. Byers to Pres. J. W. Kliewer of Bethel College in November of 1912. He suggested in this letter that the next step in the development of higher education for Mennonites should be taken by the coöperation of several branches of the church. A few weeks later Pres. J. W. Kliewer and Pres. S. K. Mosiman met in Chicago and after discussing the matter of educational coöperation they asked Pres. Byers to meet with them. The three presidents of the three Mennonite Colleges with Rev. A. S. Shelly of the Eastern District of the General Conference met at the Lasalle Hotel in Chicago in December, 1912. Two important decisions were made at this meeting: First, that any advanced work in education in the Mennonite church could best be accomplished by coöperation of a number of Mennonite groups; Second, that if sufficient interest in such a movement should manifest itself a meeting should be called at some central place to consider the possibility of such an undertaking.

It was soon discovered that a number from several of the Mennonite groups were interested and expressed their willingness to attend a meeting to discuss a union school movement. This meeting was held at Warsaw, Indiana, on May 29, 1913. There were twenty-four interested persons present at this meeting, representing five groups of Mennonites. Rev. Benjamin Esch, Rev. A. B. Rutt and John Ropp were present from the Central Conference of Mennonites.

The most important resolution passed at this meeting was that it is the sense of this meeting that an institution be established representing the various branches of the Church giving under-graduate and graduate work of a standard college and theological and Biblical work of a standard seminary. At this same meeting a Board of fifteen men was named, whose duty it should be to take the necessary steps to establish the proposed institution. Rev. J. H. King, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, and Rev. A. B. Rutt were members of the Board from the Central Conference.

This Board met June 24, 1913, at the Mennonite Home Chapel in Chicago. At this meeting it was decided that the proposed school should be established in connection with Central Mennonite College at Bluffton, Ohio. The name adopted for the new school was Bluffton College and Mennonite Seminary. The school opened on September 17, 1913, with over a hundred students. Dr. Mosiman was President of the institution and Prof. N. E. Byers, Dean.

From the beginning of this institution there were a number of men in the Central Conference who were vitally interested. On March 10, 1914, the ministers of the Conference met at Bloomington, Illinois, and passed a resolution endorsing the individuals of the Conference who were taking an active part in the work of the school. Another member of the Central Conference of Mennonites, who should be mentioned here as a firm supporter of Bluffton College was John Ropp of Bloomington, Illinois. Mr. and Mrs. Ropp and Mrs. Ropp's mother, Mrs. Mary Rupp, have given approximately $180,000 to the institution. By 1915 the Conference officially endorsed Bluffton College. In the 1916 campaign of the College for the raising of $200,000 endowment, the Central Conference Mennonite Church decided to raise $30,000 of this amount. Prof. Huffman of the college went through the churches soliciting the money. In the conference of 1924 at Congerville, Illinois, the Conference again passed a resolution approving the campaign of the college to raise $500,000. The Conference at present supports the college with money and students. It is the only conference thus far of all the Mennonite conferences that has consistently elected all of its members to the Board.

In the establishment of the new school by the various branches of Mennonites, it was noted that the name Bluffton College and Mennonite Seminary was given to the new institution. This suggested the idea that the Seminary should have a large place in this new united educational movement of the Mennonites. In fact the seminary was considered the most important by many of the church leaders because the great need of an educational institution was to train missionaries, ministers and other Christian workers.

From 1913 to 1920 the college and seminary were under one board. The seminary was a department of the college. After seven years of its existence as a part of the college, a number of the Mennonite Church leaders felt that the institution was too weak in teaching force and equipment to attract any considerable number of graduates of other colleges.

The Mennonite Seminary remained a department of the college until 1921 when Witmarsum Theological Seminary was established. During this time the seminary had two professors until 1917, then three. The A. M. and B. D. degrees were granted to several students.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bluffton College, January 27, 28, 1921, the matter of the expansion of the work of the Seminary was considered. A committee of five was appointed to bring in a report to the Board of Trustees. Rev. Emanuel Troyer was a member of this committee. The report of this committee provided that the Mennonite Seminary be placed in charge of a committee of five men. Troyer again served on this committee. After several meetings of this committee the Seminary was finally organized and incorporated on July 6, 1921.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church has aided very materially in the financing of the institution. Up to July 6, 1921, Troyer had solicited $135.00 among friends in Central Illinois. He also invited Prof. Whitmer to visit the churches in Central Illinois and explain the need and plans of such an institution as Witmarsum Theological Seminary. The Central Conference also gave a considerable amount for the first year's operating expenses. In the conference of 1922 held at Meadows, Illinois, a resolution was passed that the Conference support one chair at the Seminary, the amount being $2,000. The Conference is supporting this chair at the present time.

Relief Work

During the European War the Friends (or Quakers) of England asked permission of the government to send their young men who had conscientious objections to war into relief work in the war-stricken regions instead of into military service. This permission was granted and when the United States entered the war the same was granted to the American Friends and other non-resistant groups.

The Mennonites, being non-resistant, also made application to the Friends to do relief work under their organization. The Central Conference of Mennonites decided in the conference of 1917, held at Hopedale, Illinois, to join with about six other Mennonite groups in carrying on War Relief Work in France. A committee on Relief Work was appointed January 3, 1918, consisting of Rev. Valentine Strubhar, Rev. Allen Miller and Rev. Aaron Augspurger.

After the close of the war the Conference decided to participate in permanent relief work. Thus far the relief work had been done in France but now work was done in Russia, Germany, and the Near East. From 1918 to 1922 the Conference raised $15,000. From the time the Conference entered relief work to the present the total given through congregations and by individuals is over $270,000. The conference has had a representative on the permanent Central Relief Committee from the beginning in the person of Rev. Allen Miller.

All-Mennonite Convention

The Central Conference Mennonite Church has been vitally interested from the beginning of its history in the closer affiliation of the Mennonite groups. As stated before, the *Christian Evangel,* the official organ of the Conference, was started with the hope that it might become an All-Mennonite paper. At a meeting of the ministers held at Peoria, Illinois, October 17, 1917, a committee was appointed to attempt to form an All-Mennonite Christian Endeavor and Sunday School Union. Rev. Emanuel Troyer, Rev. Lee Lantz, and Rev. Benjamin Esch were appointed on the committee.

Also in 1910 Rev. Aaron Augspurger was the first one to endorse the suggestions of Rev. I. A. Sommer for a discussion of the question of all-Mennonite union. On May 5, 1910, Sommer, then editor of *The Mennonite,* the official organ of the General Conference of Mennonites, published an editorial under the title, "In What Fundamentals do Mennonites Agree?" In his editorial he suggested that a conference should be held of the leaders of all the Mennonite branches and invited a discussion of the subject in the church papers. There was opposition from only one source. On August 18, 1910, President N. E. Byers of Goshen College proposed a plan for the starting of an All-Mennonite Conference. He suggested that the editor of *The Mennonite* nominate a committee, consisting of one representative from each group of Mennonites to prepare a program, and select a time and place of meeting. Rev. Valentine Strubhar was the representative from the Central Conference of Mennonites.

The first All-Mennonite Convention was held at Berne, Indiana, August 19, 20, 1913. Fourteen of the Central Conference Mennonite people were present. The Conference has been represented very well at all the conventions. These All-Mennonite Conventions have been held every three years, the last one having been held at Nappanee, Indiana, September 2 and 3, 1925. At this convention it was decided to hold the meetings every two years. Suggestions have been made that the Central Conference Church merge with other groups such as the Defenseless Mennonites and the General Conference Mennonites, but no movement has yet been made in this direction.

Young People's Retreat

The Young People's Retreat was held in 1925 at Bluffton, Ohio. The Central Conference sent eight young people to the retreat and also had a representative on the Retreat Committee. The 1926 representative was Gerald Stahley of Danvers, Illinois. The retreats are to be continued. The Conference has given its support financially and morally.

In concluding this Central Conference history it may be happily noted how the branch has grown under the guidance and nurture of Jonathan Yoder, Joseph Stuckey, and Peter Schantz from one pioneer congregation into thirty churches, organized into a conference carrying on many activities.

BOOK V

SMALLER GROUPS

CHAPTER LV

THE OLD ORDER AMISH

The Arthur Settlement[1]

The foregoing chapters of Part II have been devoted entirely to the history of the Bloomington-Peoria Amish Settlement in Central Illinois. Quite independent of this group another colony was settled in the territory around Arthur. Unlike the Bloomington-Peoria group these Amish have retained the original practices of their fathers, so are to be classified with "the old Order" branch.[2]

The first of these people to come to Douglas and Moultrie Counties followed Bishop Joel Beachy of Grantsville, Maryland, and Moses Yoder of Summit Mills, Pennsylvania, who started west in June of the year 1864 to find a location where they could farm without liming the soil before raising a crop. They had good farms in the east, but were tired of burning limestone and applying it every year to their soil. In starting west, Joel Beachy had in mind to locate in Wisconsin while Moses Yoder had looked towards Missouri. After visiting both of these states and starting homeward they arrived at Pana, Illinois one Saturday evening and decided to rest there over Sunday. When they walked out in the country as far as Onega, the country looked very promising to them. Monday morning they took the train for Mattoon, then walked to Arcola a distance of fourteen miles and there met Joel

---

[1] Information furnished by L. A. Miller, Arthur, Illinois, and Oney Fleener, Villa Grove, Illinois.

[2] For brief early history of the Amish and Old Order see Book I. Chap. III.

Smith who took them about through the country for a day or two. They were greatly impressed by it, but decided to wait and see it again later in the summer.

They went home without buying and returned again in September the same year. This time they were accompanied by Daniel Miller and Daniel Otto and others who had, urged by the entreaties of Yoder and Miller, prepared to go into the new section where they could be apart from the rest of the world and together in a settlement of their own people. The followers of Yoder and Miller settled upon the unbroken prairie around the little village of Arthur. Daniel Miller bought the Ike Cosler farm now known as the Jerry Yoder farm, his son Edward Yoder living on it at present. Moses Yoder bought 160 acres later know as the Joe Yoder farm. Moses Yoder then rented this farm to Daniel Otto. In November when he came back to pay for it he decided to buy another farm for his own home. He purchased the Henry Cosler farm where he lived until his death. This farm is now known as the D. M. Yoder farm. On this third trip Moses Yoder also bought a section of railroad land at $8.10 per acre. The northeast corner of this section now joins the village of Arthur. This section was bought for Jonathan Hostetler of Pennsylvania, but he never moved to the settlement. Later Joel Miller traded some land in Pennsylvania on the northern half of this section and moved on it in the year 1869 where he resided until his death.

Moses Yoder, Daniel Miller, and Daniel Otto with their families were the first Amish emigrants to arrive in the community. They landed at Arcola on March 3, 1865, from Summit Mills, Pennsylvania, and were accompanied by a Dunkard family by the name of Cornelius Hostetler, who also located in the vicinity of Arthur. Jonas J. Kauffman and family arrived in the year of 1865 from Iowa.

Kauffman was ordained as minister in 1868, and as bishop in 1873. In 1880 he and his family accompanied by Isaac Miller and family moved to Oregon. Moses Kauffman and family arrived from Iowa March 3, 1868 and located on the Henry Cosler farm, now known as the Isaac Bartholomew farm. He was ordained to the ministry in 1869 and died in 1898 at the age of 71 years. Daniel Schrock and family arrived in 1870 from Holmes County, Ohio, locating on the farm now known as the Benjamin Schrock farm. He was ordained to the ministry the same year and died in 1890 at the age of 62.

New emigrants kept coming in until the year 1888 when it was found necessary to divide the church into two districts, one known as the D. J. Beachy or Moultrie County district and the other as the D. J. Plank or Douglas County district. The Douglas County side was again divided on December 7, 1902 and the Moultrie County side was divided again in 1906. The northern half of the Douglas County district, that of D. J. Plank, was again divided in the fall of 1922. Thus at the close of 1922 the original settlement had been divided into five separate districts and now at the close of 1925 another division is being discussed and the vote will likely favor the formation of the sixth division.

The following is a list of bishops, ministers and deacons which have served in the settlement:

Joseph N. Keim, bishop and minister, 1865-1872.
Jonas J. Kauffman, bishop and minister, 1868-1880.
Moses J. Kauffman, ordained 1869, died 1898.
Daniel Schrock, ordained 1870, died 1890.
C. P. Hershberger, ordained deacon 1874, ordained minister 1869.
Daniel J. Beachy, ordained minister 1881, bishop 1885, the oldest minister and bishop now in charge of the settlement.
D. J. Plank, ordained minister 1889, bishop 1892.
Joseph D. Schrock, ordained minister 1890.
Gideon N. Kauffman, ordained minister 1892.
H. J. Mast, ordained minister October 21, 1894.
Eli Y. Otto, ordained deacon November 17, 1895, died 1922.
Abraham D. Schrock, ordained minister October 9, 1904.
S. N. Beachy, ordained minister 1906, bishop 1920.
S. D. Beachy, ordained minister 1910, died 1921.

A. J. Mast, bishop, moved in from Mississippi in 1904.
Henry Yoder, minister, moved in from Michigan 1913, died 1915.
D. J. Mast, minister, moved in from Indiana in 1912.
D. G. Schlabach, minister, moved in from Alabama in 1916, ordained bishop in 1919.
John Miller, minister, moved in from Alabama, 1916, moved to Indiana 1920.
Joseph L. Schrock, ordained minister November 17, 1918.
Noah B. Schrock, ordained minister April 21, 1921.
Obed A. Diener, ordained minister April 23, 1921.
David A. Troyer, ordained deacon October 9, 1921.
A. J. Miller, ordained deacon October 21, 1921.
John W. Stutzman, ordained minister October 1, 1922.
Daniel M. Otto, ordained deacon October 8, 1922.

The language spoken by the members of these districts is known as "the Pennsylvania-Dutch." However many of their words are in English. A close listener can understand much of their conversation. Nevertheless, these people take pride in speaking and writing good German, so during the summer months many of the children are tutored in German by a very able instructor. There are three private school houses within the five church districts.

Their odd dress and unusual customs cause the outside world to think these Amishmen very strange and old-fashioned. In their sole occupation of farming, the Amish are recognized as more prosperous than the American farmers of that section. From the crude homes that were established there in the wild country over fifty years ago, beautiful abodes of simple style, huge barns, and other buildings, with yards and well-fenced fields are to be seen. The bright newly painted red barns and the tall windmills towering above the tree tops, and the large fields are the first things to attract the attention of a traveler. Beautifully decorated large houses painted in white and trimmed in green without shades but green shutters on the many windows are to be seen.

Often in one large yard two and even three family homes are built together, or very near each other—the home of the father and his married sons. It is not unusual for the sons of a family to marry and build their homes in the father's yard. This they usually strive to do. Enough farming land in reach of the sons is highly prized by the entire family. Insufficient land for tilling is a reason why the young men have to leave the home place after they have started homes of their own.

The standards of simplicity have not changed an iota. In the market place or at their work in their homes the women and girls wear the same style of clothes as was worn when they came to the state. This consists of a black dress, white apron, and a neat white cap, called "the devotional covering," on their heads. Their neck and shoulders are covered with a large white handkerchief, which is a hint claimed to be taken from the Apostle Paul. Their heavier garments are dark cloaks. The wives and daughters, as well as the husbands and sons, are at all times strictly plain in attire. By avoiding all frivolities of fashion, there is no distinction between the rich and the poor though many have gained wealth, and none are extremely poor. The men wear dark home-made shirts and trousers. A heavy cloak covers the body to the waist line. The shirts are fastened together with hooks and eyes. Suspenders made from strips of black wide elastic hold the trousers in place. A broad brim hat covers the head of untrimmed hair. Their dress and manners make them appear much like the original Friends or Quakers.

The home life is very simple. Their houses are neat and comfortable. The spacious front rooms are seldom used, except on special occasions such as church services, weddings, and "other social" gatherings. However, there is ample room elsewhere in the large house for the average family, which too is usually large.

The rooms are well lighted with large kerosene lamps on poles or on the walls. The light is nearly equal to that of gas or electricity, as the kerosene for the lamps is carefully mixed with gasoline and other ingredients.

The big porches, the beautiful lawn with immense overspreading shade trees under which are huge lawn swings, and the many beautiful flowers make the outdoor life a great pleasure for the family during the summer months. At the close of a hot and hard day of toil in the fields during the summer months the farmers and their families enjoy the evening meal on the lawn near the kitchen. Many times during periods of pleasant weather when they eat outside, lights are seen only in the kitchen where the women are finishing up their work. After supper and as the shadows darken the country, the men lie on the grass enjoying the coolness of the breeze. Here many interesting happenings of the day are recited and enjoyed.

Daily worship, although usually not long, is better established than the "Throne of Grace" in the average American home. During the long evenings of the winter months there is much reading from the Bible. The family seats itself around the huge roaring stove while the father points out the sacred passages and offers prayer. They frequently break out into enthusiastic song. Although a visitor from the outside may not understand the language, he is usually stirred by the spirit that exists. In the home few books are to be found besides the Bible, some German books such as "The Works of Menno Simons" and "Martyr's Mirror," a farm magazine, an agricultural journal, school books, and the Arthur Graphic. This newspaper gets its main support from the agricultural interests of these Amish.

Though they associate little with the English yet with their own people they are extremely neighborly. On holidays and Sundays the families are very seldom alone. They usually invite a number of families for an all day affair, or respond to such an invitation. The community and religious life are built around this feature of fellowship. They take the Bible literally and try to follow it very closely. The discipline is very strict. The "Ban and Shunning" is applied. Several years ago, Abe Kauffman, a member of the settlement became "worldly" in his views, consequently his membership in the Amish Church was taken from him. The offender vowed that he would get back his rights. He carried the case to the Douglas County court. Here for the first time the Amish were drawn into a lawsuit. They told the court their side of the case. Agreement was made that Kauffman would be reinstated in the Church and his rights given if he would repent and follow the standards of his people. This was done and the man who fell away is now highly respected by his fellow-worshipers.

The adults are baptized by pouring, and they receive a birthright in the church. No church buildings are to be seen anywhere in the settlement. Each Sunday and holiday services are held in the various homes. After morning worship the large dinner is served by the hostess and her daughters. Then light games are played. About four-thirty in the afternoon a light lunch is given to the guests, who make preparations to return to their respective homes in time to "do up the chores."

At these meetings on Sundays and holidays, the timid young men often meet the lovely young lassies who later become their wives. Courtship includes no dances, card-playing, movies, or any other amusements. But much buggy-riding takes place. Repeatedly two, three, and even four topless buggies, loaded with young couples, can be seen driving very close together on the country road. The party of riders are made merry by a variety of gay German songs that they sing together as they ride slowly along beautiful country roads.

Among these people the romantic part of courtship has been preserved. The young men go to see their sweethearts in buggies or on horseback. The little old-fashioned organ performs an important part in the entertainment. Most of the girls can play the inspiring old German songs by heart. The young men join in singing. Some unusual talent for singing has been displayed though they would feel it wrong to specialize in music. They learn the fundamentals of music in the public schools.

The young ladies are very gracious to their guests. Many dainty things to eat are served. The entertainment is entirely furnished by the host. The girls take pleasure in having large plots of flowers in the garden and in the yard. A riot of colors from the many varieties is to be seen. The maidens are often beautifully decorated with these flowers by their young men callers.

The weddings generally take place on holidays preferably Thanksgiving when often there is a double wedding. These are great days of feasting and merry making. Days of preparation are required for the event. The pantries have their shelves heaped with pumpkin pies and other rich foods.

This is not particularly true
The weddings take place only on
Tues, or Thurs, but not necessarily on holidays

The wedding is counted as a sad one by the young men if they cannot give the groom the "married man's dip" by plunging him into the watering tank.[1] In most cases the newly married man quietly surrenders. By doing so he has a chance to change his clothes in preparation for the icy plunge.

The bride is received with perfect courtesy. Many worthy gifts are presented her. Milch cows, teams of driving horses or a single driving outfit, are the things that her parents and close relatives may present her. The lady friends give articles of value in the household, while the men present gold coins and paper money. Of course, the groom receives gifts which come from his father who helps him "get set up in farming."

Births are quietly announced in the neighborhood. Presents from the relatives are given to the new child.

[1] Personal Interview with Henry Yoder, a highly respected Amish from Arthur, Illinois (Apr. 1956)

The child hears practically nothing excepting the German language, therefore learns German very easily. Strangers who speak English are kindly asked if they will refrain from talking much around the very young Amish children. It is not because the parents object to their children learning the language that is spoken by the American people, but they want the young folks to be able to speak German. English is learned by the children when they enter the public schools. This prevents the mixture of the two languages.

The children receive an eighth grade education under the course of study prescribed by the State. A few of the young men have taken a month or two training in the high school at Arthur. But by the protest of the colony they discontinued and went back to work on the farm. Albert Helmuth was very ambitious to become a physician among his people. He was apt in his school work, but gave up his studies in the first semester, because his parents demanded that he should return to the farm or lose his home and community rights.

With the exception of a few operators of threshing and cornshelling outfits, and the buggy builders, all the Amish are farmers. None of these people are members of the farm bureaus, nor do they attend the agriculture school. Nevertheless, they accept all the worthy plans that have been tested and proved by the schools and the farm bureaus. Consequently the land is kept in a highly productive condition for raising the chief crops of the district—corn, wheat, oats, soy beans, and clover hay.

Poultry raising and light gardening have been very profitable for the women. The returns often pay the home expense for many months of the year. Thereby the farmers are enabled to make timely improvements, make investments in livestock, or land. This is the direct cause of the Amish adding hundreds of acres to their colony.

A vast amount of the food for the colony, as well as the feed for the live stock and poultry, is raised and prepared on the farms. The community and private grist mills make the flour, while the molasses is produced at the sorghum mill. Potatoes are dug and stored with other vegetables in their cellars. All kinds of fruits obtainable are canned in glass jars, and put into the family warehouse for consumption at all times of the year.

On some of the farms dairying is as important as the cultivation of the land. On these farms a large herd of milch cows is kept. Both morning and evening, children from ten to eighteen can be seen squatting on a stool milking their assigned cows. Milking is the first task a child learns after being able to walk. The arrangement of the stalls for the cows is more comfortable and convenient than that ordinarily used by farmers.

An unusual interest is taken in the orchards. They receive cultivation, are pruned and well-sprayed. The large berry patches are well cared for. Much fruit, cider, and vinegar are sold. A large amount of home produce is disposed of by private customers going into the community to buy eggs, butter, and the like. The Amish butter is widely known. At Decatur, Arthur, Tuscola and other towns about ten cents a pound above the market price is paid for the Amish butter. Due to careful churning of the cream when at the proper stage the butter produced is of a high quality. Some homes make as much as fifty to eighty pounds every week.

Very little renting of land is done outside of the immediate family. It is customary for a young farmer to save his wages until he marries and then by the help of his father to buy a small farm of his own, or help the father farm the home place.

The money of the community is banked by each father and son who have their own wages and crops. The women and younger members of the families often have little personal checking accounts. Notes are given and accepted freely. The method of handling money is quite modern.

No insurance is carried of any kind outside of the community right. When a building is destroyed an appraiser is sent to determine the loss. The owner is helped to rebuild again by the entire community. Neither telephones, nor automobiles have any place in the life of the Amish.

There is no doctor in the community and when an emergency case arises, a swift horse with a cart and a rider is dispatched to Arthur. Usually the active and simple life of these people causes them to require small service of a physician. If the case can not be handled by the simple but effective home remedies, there is no hesitancy in sending for the doctor.

The funerals are simple. The services are held in the home with very little music, and no fulsome eulogy. Some comforting Bible verses are read and the obituary given. The burial is made in some little corner of the farm near the home. Each family has its own little grave lot. Flowers are generally sown on the new graves. Travelers see great beauty and a peaceful, but silent story, as they drive slowly through the settlement late in the summer evenings, looking at these fenced in mounds with their small headstones.

The attitude that the Amish took toward fighting during the World War caused them to be subjects of unjust abuse. For years they had lived quietly in the settlement. Then came the dark days of the war. The young men were drafted, seemingly snatched from their homes, religion, and everything else that was worth while in their lives. In tears the fathers, mothers, and daughters told the young men to go and die if duty demanded but not to shoulder a gun to kill another human being. Their views about fighting were explained in the camps. They were given heavy routine work to do instead, which they gladly did.

A few headstrong leaders stirred the emotions of many excited persons in the home community, who did whatever harm they could to the Amish, because of their religious convictions against war, and because they spoke German. Paints of various colors were smeared on many of the barns and outbuildings. Attacks and threats were made. The friends of the Amish near Arthur brought an end to such lawlessness by reporting it to the county sheriff. They contributed to Red Cross work. After the war they gave liberally to Relief work. They do not believe in mission work so have no such activities. L. A. Miller has a room fitted in his farmhouse from which he supplies the colony with books and literature. His bookstore is patronized by Amishmen from other communities. He does a comparatively large mail-order business.

The settlement has grown continually. It now extends beyond Moultrie and Douglas into Coles County. The membership is four hundred but the entire Amish community probably comprises about three thousand individuals. Aside from this large group attempts have been made to establish settlements in two other places.

Shelby County Colony (*Extinct*)

In the year 1872 a small Old Order Amish Colony settled in Shelby County, Illinois, coming from Elkhart and LaGrange Counties, Indiana and Holmes County, Ohio. The earliest settlers and organizers of the church were, Jacob Miller, a minister, Jacob Plank, Christian Borntreger of LaGrange County, Indiana, and Tobias Schrock of Holmes County, Ohio. Christian Borntreger was later ordained to the ministry and Eli Borntreger moved back to Indiana after remaining about a year and a half. In 1883, when the organizers disagreed, most of the members moved away, going mostly to Reno County, Kansas.

Fayette County Colony (*Extinct*)

In the fall of 1893 an Old Order Amish Church was started in Fayette County, Illinois, northwest from Brownstown, and later extended west of Vandalia.

About half a dozen families moved there the first fall and a number more the following spring, among them were the following families: Preacher Moses J. Yoder, Douglas County, Illinois now at Bennetts Switch, Indiana; Preacher John A. Miller of Oregon, now at Weatherford, Oklahoma; the late D. K. Beiler, who died near Shipshewana, Indiana; Isaac N. Kauffman, Arthur, Illinois now at Nappanee, Indiana; Noah S. Beachy, Arthur, Illinois now at Haven, Kansas; Daniel Stutzman of Indiana returned to Indiana; Jacob Kauffman, of Indiana, now at Kokomo, Indiana; A. C. Miller of Sugar Creek, Ohio returned to that place; Jeff. Schrock of Sugar Creek, Ohio, now at Middlefield, Ohio. Among the other families were: Levi Hostetler, Adam Hostetler, Noah Kauffman, Jacob Mishler, Benjamin Miller, Samuel Troyer, Levi Troyer, Uriah Miller, Samuel Schrock, John Troyer, Noah Troyer, Christian Eigsti, John Miller, David Kauffman, Jacob Yoder, Abe Nissley, Joe P. Brenneman, William J. Kauffman.

The first ministers that moved there were Moses J. Yoder and family from near Arthur, Illinois, and John A. Miller and family of Oregon. About two years later Samuel Bender, who moved there from Iowa, was ordained to the ministry and later ordained as bishop. Preacher Joseph Bontreger also lived there a few years. The congregation never got a healthy start and after about a decade went out of existence entirely.

CHAPTER LVI

THE CONSERVATIVE AMISH[1]

The Sleeping Preacher Group

Aside from the Old Order Amish as treated previously another branch of Amish later came into the state. They too were independent of all other branches or groups. Some Amish, unlike the Old Order, believed in having meeting houses and in general were a trifle more liberal. They were called Conservative Amish, but in reality are not quite as conservative as the Old Order Amish. The only representatives of this branch who settled in Illinois were of a particular type, for they were followers of the so called "sleeping preacher." The history of the Sleeping Preacher Group is mainly the biography of its leader, John D. Kauffman.

John D. Kauffman was born in Logan County, Ohio, July 7, 1847. While yet a young man he came with his parents to Elkhart County, Indiana, where he lived nearly all his life. He died at his home near Shelbyville, Illinois, October 22, 1913; aged 66 years, 3 months, and 15 days. After receiving a very limited common school education, he became a farmer, from which occupation he accumulated enough to provide for his material wants, and to support in comfort his bereft widow, Sarah Stutzman Kauffman.

Early in life he joined the Amish Church, in which faith and practice he remained throughout life. In his younger days he passed through the lot for the ministry though another received the ordination. By nature he was sociable and inclined to love sport and to make humorous remarks. All men have weaknesses and imperfections, and such were also noticeable in the life of this man. He was guilty at times of excessive drinking and smoking. With all his manifest weakness, some were inclined to make too much of the man, and in his preaching he often warned the people against making a god out of him. To those nearest him he also manifested a deep spiritual nature and a strong will and desire to obey God in all His ordinances and commands. He felt that God was using him for a special and important work.

---

[1] Information from Pius Hostetler and other members of the Mt. Hermon Congregation near Shelbyville, Illinois, with material from the *Herald of Truth* and John J. Kennel, Bishop of the Linn Church, Roanoke, Illinois.

Bishop John F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana visited him in his home in March, 1882. Funk said that he was generally well spoken of, especially esteemed as a man of sincerity and conscientiousness, and considered a good church member.

In regard to his preaching Funk gives the following report in the *Herald of Truth*:[2] "When I came to Kauffman's house he was already overtaken with those cramps as they may be called. He was lying on the floor and had his hands tightly clinched, and at times struck on the floor so that it sounded like a heavy hammer coming down. Then after being there about fifteen minutes a hymn was announced and as the singing began his clinched hands were lifted straight up, and in a little while the hands were separated, and each hand with outstretched fingers, was held high and quite still, for about forty-five minutes while three hymns were being sung.

"It seems almost impossible that a strong, well man, in his natural state, could lift his hands and arms so high and quiet, except for a few rather strong jerkings, for so long a time. Then he turned his face toward the floor and briefly prayed in a low and rather indistinct voice, closing with the Lord's prayer. Soon he tried to rise. His waiters helped him to his feet. He began to speak rather fast in German, his first words being, 'Peace be with you.' Then he spoke of the great love and mercy of God. He said he came before the people in great weakness and confessed he was a great sinner, and that he did not know how long he would have to stand before them, but if it were until the rising of the sun it would be only because of the mercy of God. Then he admonished his hearers to prove themselves and see if they were living near to God. If they were not living for God and would be called away they would have no promise. They should prove themselves whether they were not too cold and careless. Then he spoke of the creation, the beautiful garden of Eden, and the command given to Adam, which he should have kept, and that we also have a command which we shall keep. Then he spoke of the love of God, that He gave His Son to die for us on the cross; how God stooped down and took a lump of earth and made man, and gave him a living soul, and this soul we shall bring back to Him pure and good, and we could easily die in the twinkling of an eye, but God did not want one soul to be lost. He prepared a beautiful place for us in heaven. Jesus was willing to go and prepare those mansions for us, but it was not needful for Him to go as the Lord had already prepared them all for us. He spoke of the angels in Heaven where Satan exalted himself and was cast out and is now going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He was cast out because of exaltation and now that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God. He admonished us to prepare ourselves for those glorious mansions and if we did not love Him, we would be cast into hell, yet His mercy was for all. Here he suddenly stopped speaking and stood with outstretched arms and hands, and offered a short prayer. In one or two minutes he began speaking in the English language.

---

[2] *Herald of Truth,* **March 15, 1882.**

"While speaking he had his eyes closed, but walked around in the room, his arms and hands moving continually. It was necessary to keep him away from the hot stove, and move the lamps. Sometimes while speaking we noticed him shaking. One time he shook so violently that the floor trembled.

"In his English speaking he repeated largely what he had already said in German. [The report given by Funk of the English sermon is omitted.]

"Here he spoke in German again and made mention of the conversation of Christ and the apostles where the Lord told them, 'Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Then he said the doctors could not overpower this body. Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, when they could have gone through in forty days if they had obeyed. When we have done all, we shall yet say we are unworthy servants. If the righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly sinner appear.

"Then he spoke of the punishment of the wicked, and made mention of the many false doctrines that are taught and accepted by Gospel preachers. Some want to reject the apostles' teachings, some are self-righteous, and do not believe, and some want to accept only a part of the Gospel teachings and doing this is not from God. He spoke of a young soul that had been called away that day to inherit the beautiful mansions in heaven, and if we had died in our infancy we would not be in the danger we are in now. He spoke of the blessedness of the redeemed and that the children were joint heirs to the glory of the saved, yet all need to suffer. Even little children must suffer, but Jesus says, 'Let the children come unto me, and forbid them not.' Also we must become as the children, and suffer for

His name's sake, and in the days of suffering and temptation, will the love in many wax cold. We must bear all our sufferings with patience, and not leave Jesus and the Lord will be with us, and if God be for us who can be against us. He talked strong and hard against our glorying in our way of serving God, or our goodness, and thinking ourselves above others. Then he spoke at length about Elijah, and his being taken to heaven, and his mantle being given to Elisha, and the connecting incidents, to show the Lord's fatherly care over His children. He mentioned the three requests of Elisha to Elijah, and his three answers, the three signs given to Moses, and three to Noah, and three signs of the Savior, and that we should be willing to obey Him. We must use power or efforts to do the work of God. Jesus and His apostles teach us what to do, and the preachers shall build the church not by force, but by the pure Word. Here he stopped again for a drink. Then he spoke of the sin of mocking, and mentioned the forty-two children that were killed by two bears because they had mocked the prophet of the Lord. Also spoke of the sin of unbelief and said the mockers can not go to heaven, but must go to the lake of fire.

"After speaking some more he said this body has now done his work, let us pray for those who bring these accusations against us, that we may be more like-minded, let us pray more that we be not led away from the faith. He also spoke of his going away to a strange land to teach people of Jesus and His love and of hell and its awfulness. Then he said this body will now rest.

"He said the preachers present shall give testimony and also that there were not such great sinners present as at times. He mentioned the three hymns that had been sung, quoting the first line of each in the order they had been sung and said they should sing yet, 'Wo ist Jesu mein Verlangen?' Then he knelt and prayed for all, as Paul commands, and closed with the Lord's prayer.

"His attendants laid him away, he being unconscious of all that had been done and said. His body remained quite stiff for a while after his preaching, then went to sleep and slept quiet till morning, when he seemed quite rested and in good cheer.

"There are many wonderful things done by people in a trance but when a man every week at a certain time, is overcome with such cramps, and in that condition preaches the Word of God, warning the sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and holds to a certain confession of faith, and teaching, keeping in the path of proper conduct, etc., this is indeed a very remarkable thing of this present time."

Funk says that in the above he has only given a short sketch of his sermon, as he spoke so fast he could only jot down this much in long hand, but by it every one can know the nature of his preaching. He sometimes preached two hours and occasionally almost four.

His prayers were quite unusual. One of the first times he came to Missouri he preached at the aged Bishop J. C. Kenagy's house and Kenagy said that such a prayer he had never heard, and that he would have given five dollars if he had it written down. At one time when this bishop gave testimony to this "Spirit" preaching, he said, "Let no one dare to say a word against it."

One time in his preaching at his home in Indiana he said: "Soon he would have to stand up alone." Many did not know what it meant and thought, surely not all men would forsake him. But later on his bishop who had stood by him, for many years, forsook him. Then the spirit began to preach that they should move away. At first, when they told him about this, which had been spoken by him in the trance, he thought it could hardly be. He felt they could hardly leave, but by the fall of 1907 he with several other families moved to Shelby County, Illinois, where after considerable investigation they felt the Lord had directed them. At that time the locality was without a bishop or resident minister for Kauffman had not been ordained. An invitation was given to a bishop to come and serve them but he did not respond. The "Spirit" comforted them by telling them they would get help. The ministers, S. E. Yoder of Delafield, Illinois, and Peter Zimmerman of Roanoke, Illinois, sided with the group, preaching for them at times. These would have been willing to locate in Shelby County had circumstances permitted.

Finally an invitation was sent to Bishop John R. Zook of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. One evening after the preaching, while Kauffman was still in his trance, the brethren were talking of sending for Zook but did not know his middle letter. Then the "Spirit" spoke right out, "John R. Zook, he is the man, and I am the angel Gabriel that is telling you." Zook came, and held communion and baptismal services for them. Later on he was asked again to come and serve them. Though warned by other ministers not to come, he came and held communion and baptismal services and by the request of the members he ordained Peter Zimmerman, minister at Roanoke, as bishop.

Since the bishop lived so far away, there was need of a resident bishop. Zimmerman was called and by the choice and consent of the entire church John D. Kauffman was ordained bishop of the church in Shelby County, in the spring of 1911. As a bishop, Kauffman was much concerned for the good of his little flock. More than once he said he had to give an account for all of the members, but that all of them together need not give an account for him.

Mt. Hermon Church, Shelbyville

As stated before the Kauffman people started a church near Shelbyville about 1907. They wanted a place to build a church in accordance with the teachings of the

"Spirit." A church house was erected in 1912. The name Mt. Hermon was suggested by Adam Schrock, one of the charter members. A Methodist Church near by is called Mt. Carmel; the school house, Mt. Tabor; and the United Brethren Church, Mt. Zion. There is a small stream by the name of Jordan which completes the topographical terminology of Palestine. John D. Kauffman donated the ground on which a wooden frame building about 32 by 48 feet was erected with a seating capacity of about 200 people. There are three trustees chosen by the church body. Adam Schrock, C. C. Eigsti, and Jacob D. Kropf were chosen in the beginning. When Kropf died several years ago John J. Kauffman was put in his place. Money is collected by free will offerings to pay janitor, fuel, and other bills. The general running expenses are not high as the ministers are not paid or supported. The church has taken up collections for some outside causes but no figures are available to show what was given in this way. They do not aim to support missions. The present membership is eighty-five.

The "Spirit," that is Kauffman in a trance, told them that they had a good shepherd, "thus testifying from heaven that they had a good bishop." In the fall of 1912 a minister was chosen, the lot falling on Joseph Reber, who was ordained as bishop in the spring of 1914. When preaching "by Spirit" about the needed qualifications for ministers, he said that he would not take any one into the lot who was less than thirty years old nor any one that had ever been expelled from the church.

The Linn Church, Roanoke

As previously stated John R. Zook of Pennsylvania came to Shelbyville and ordained Peter Zimmerman who had been preacher at the Roanoke Amish-Mennonite

Church.[8] In 1904, since his home congregation would not recognize him as bishop, Zimmerman and forty members withdrew from the Roanoke Congregation. The matter of "Shunning members under the Ban" was the issue upon which separation took place. They wished to adhere to this practice but the Roanoke Congregation no longer felt it necessary to insist on the old Jacob Amman rigidity. D. D. Miller and Daniel Johns, both from Indiana, were the spokesmen for the Roanoke Congregation. The group soon afterwards formed a church of their own which met in an empty farm house. A few years later a building was erected with a seating capacity of one hundred and fifty with small balconies. This building was situated five miles northwest of Roanoke in Linn Township and was called the "Linn Amish-Mennonite Church." It is to be considered as a church of the conservative Amish branch and more particularly a part of the Sleeping Preacher group. Peter Zimmerman had begun to serve the new church after the Roanoke Congregation had made a queer move in expelling Zimmerman from the church which he had already left. A few years later Joseph J. Kennell was ordained preacher. After Zimmerman's death, the only bishop over the Linn Church was Joseph Reber of Shelbyville until Kennell was elected to that office. From this fact the congregation is referred to locally as the Kennell church. It has not grown beyond its original numbers.

There are a few small congregations belonging to the Sleeping Preacher group in other states but the Linn and Mt. Hermon churches are the only ones in Illinois.

---

[8] See Chap. XXII, The Roanoke Congregation.

CHAPTER LVII

THE REFORMED MENNONITES

The Sterling Congregation[1]

The Reformed Mennonites had been founded by John Herr in 1812 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The traditional story is that Francis Herr, a Mennonite minister, had been expelled from the church on account of dishonesty in a horse trade. Concerning this Daniel Musser, the Reformed Mennonite historian, says, "I do not believe this story is true. I have made diligent inquiry of those who, I think, could not fail to have known it, if true; but they said they never knew or heard anything of it, until long after his death."[2]

Be that as it may it is certain that Francis Herr discontinued his attendance in the Lancaster County church of which he was a member. He with several of his friends, also ex-Mennonites, held religious services in his own house until his death. John Herr, his son, who had never belonged to the Mennonite Church, becoming "convicted of sin," took up his father's cause. He had himself baptized by one of the associates in 1812. It was the beginning of the branch called "New Mennonites," "Herrites," or more commonly "The Reformed Mennonites." This group, to which a few were added, selected Herr as their bishop.

The group, and especially Herr, accused the other church of being dead, corrupt, and worldly. This attitude is recorded by Daniel Musser in his history of the branch. An extract follows: "In this light we look upon the 'Old Mennonite Church!' We believe it was once the Church of Christ, possessed of the Holy life-giving Spirit, and so continued for many years; but as it had gone with the Roman Church, (which was the continuation of the first organization), it became unbelieving, disobedient, lost the Spirit, and with this the marks or evidence of the Divine Nature. As such it had come down to the people of our country at the close of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the present century.

---

[1] **Information furnished by Michael Deter, pastor, and Christian F. Miller, Sterling, Illinois.**

[2] Musser, *The Reformed Mennonite Church,* p. 298f.

"The originators of the organization known as the 'Reformed Mennonite Church,' held that Menno Simons and his brethren of his day held sound and orthodox doctrine; and that the church which bore his name at that time, was the pure, true, and united Church of Christ. To justify the course they took in forming a new organization, it became their duty at the time to show that the Mennonite Church of their day, whose organization had descended from this recognized church had become apostate, or a spiritless, dead body.

"It was a very customary thing, at the time we refer to, for the younger members to meet together on Sunday afternoon from church service, and spend the afternoon in such sports as wrestling, jumping, running foot-races, playing ball, or whatever sports and games of the kind were in vogue at the time. The older members, with preachers, would look on as spectators, and had for a proverb, 'honorable sports or diversions, no one can forbid.' At their marriages, feasting, drinking, and noisy mirth were carried to great extremes.

"At that time the old-fashioned fairs were annually held at all the towns of any size, even down to small villages. At Lancaster the gatherings were usually very large. Numbers of the members of the church attended also. There were, as may well be supposed, all kinds of wickedness and ungodly deeds practiced here.

"They still, as a general thing, were plain in their dress, and manner of life. They also still professed to be non-resistant and refused to swear; but they very grossly violated their profession of non-resistance by acts tending to countenance and abet warfare, and more especially by seeking for redress of grievance at law, and defending themselves at law against claims which they considered unjust. This was violating a very decided principle of Menno's profession. The washing of feet, if not rejected, was at least practically omitted for many years. The kiss of peace was very little if at all practiced. The refusal to hear the service, or join in worship with those who reject and refuse to obey the plain commands of the Gospel, together with avoiding excommunicated members, both of which Menno so strenuously upheld, they rejected altogether, and do so still, to the present day, in our part of the country.

"In speaking of the Mennonites I wish to be distinctly understood, as referring to the latter part of the last and the early part of the present century. In speaking of them as dead, I do not wish to be understood as looking upon them as wicked and ungodly, in the common acceptation of the word, but as carnal, unconverted, and destitute of the Holy Spirit; of which class we have amongst us in our day a large number who make no profession of faithfully fulfilling their moral obligations. Some are more loose and careless, and do not discharge their duties as well, but still not accounted wicked or bad men. But they are still spiritually dead. Their sports, enjoyments, intercourse, and amusements are all carnal."[8]

This picture of the mother church presented by this new sect is a rather dark one. No doubt some of it was true, but the old church would not admit that this sect had developed the proper solution.[4] Herr was a prolific writer and issued numerous controversial pamphlets during his lifetime. The sect added a few in number and spread to a few places in other states but has never grown large.

---

[8] Musser, *The Reformed Mennonite Church,* pp. 237-241, 275.

The first representatives entered the state of Illinois in 1847, locating in Whiteside County. Among the early settlers appear the names of Baer, Beiler, Buhler, Delp, Hendricks, Kratz, Landis, Reinhart, Shultz, and Watson. Meetings were held in the various homes, a church being organized about 1860. The church property, including the cemetery grounds, was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Ginkinger, for a consideration of $300.00 on October 24, 1866, by the trustees, John Weaver, John Hoover, and George Hagey. The property is now within the city limits of Sterling. In 1867 subscriptions were secured to build the church house, which was erected that same year at a cost of $1200.00. It is a small, plain, white, rectangular, frame structure seating about one hundred. Aside from the entry space there is but one room. A center aisle divides the two rows of plain benches. One side is occupied by the women and the other by the men. A stove in the aisle heats the room. There are no ornaments or fixtures of any kind, other than the pulpit stand. A number of sheds for vehicles have been erected across from the church house on a lot purchased on July 20, 1872, from J. E. and Sarah A. McPherson for fifty dollars by the three trustees mentioned before.

Burials were first made in the Science Ridge cemetery. When the Reformed Graveyard was started some of the burials were transferred to it, the oldest stone being dated 1854. Plans are made for the collecting of an endowment fund for the upkeep of the burying grounds beside the church house.

---

[4] See John F. Funk, *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers.*

The minister receives no salary. A voice is taken of the church for one wishing to enter the ministry. His wife must be a member of the church. After a probation period a voice is again taken and if favorable the minister is ordained. The congregation in accordance with Herr's ideas allows only ministers of the denomination to preach or pray before the members. In the case of funerals they are not permitted to attend even those of their closest relatives if the preacher is of the "World." The "Ban and Avoidance" are rigidly applied. They are plain in their dress and discard all unnecessary adornment in their houses or on their persons as vain and sinful. Nevertheless they have permitted the use of automobiles.

The following have served as deacons: John Hoover, George Hagey, Adam B. Spies, H. M. Zendt, William Miller, Benjamin Hoover, Christian Schwenck, Godfrey Horlacher, and Michael Deter. The last two were appointed together about 1898. William Schwenck is serving as deacon at the present time. The deacon is ordained for life following a probationary period similar to that of the preacher. His wife must be a member of the church in good standing.

The following have served the congregation as ministers: John Weaver, John Weckesser, William Miller, and Michael Deter. John Weaver (October 12, 1806-April 8, 1887) was ordained in 1860, or probably ordained before coming to Illinois. Weckesser, who had been placed on probation, was never ordained to the ministry. Miller was the beloved minister from 1894 until his death in 1920. Michael Deter, who was ordained to the ministry in 1910, is the present preacher. William Schwenck has been appointed as preacher on probation.

The idea of a probationary period is carried to the matter of joining the church. "One having a desire to yield his will to the service of the Lord 'gives himself up.'

He is announced before the church as a 'seeker.' At a later date after searching the scriptures and getting the consent of the church, being reannounced, he is baptized." This is usually done at communion time when the bishop is present. The rite is performed by either bishop or minister by pouring a handful of water upon the convert's head. Only adults are baptized.

The congregation at Sterling has no resident bishop. One comes in from some other church to hold communion services in the spring and fall. On the Saturday before this service there is a preparatory sermon and examination meeting during which time the ministry and deacons inquire into the state of the Church, giving counsel to the members. The communion service is followed by feet-washing, the bishop, preacher, and deacons washing the men's feet, while the minister's wife and a helper wash the sisters' feet. Preaching is held every other Sunday while singing service is held the odd Sunday evening. There seems to have been no disturbance in the transition from the "Pennsylvania-Dutch" to the English. William Miller used the English language. The services are conducted in the church during the summer and for convenience in the homes during the winter. There are no other activities—no Sunday School, no conferences, no missions, no general programs. The membership, some of which live in Morrison, numbers about forty.

The church at large has made efforts along publication lines. Musser's history has already been mentioned. John Herr's writings and others have been printed and distributed. In 1903 a booklet was published with the extended title, *Reformed Mennonites, A Manual of New Testament Teaching of Church Unity, Non-Resistance of Evil, Christians can Take no Part in Government, Non-Conformity to the World, Head Covering in Worship, and a Dissertation on Beneficiary Organizations.* In July, 1922, the first issue of *Good Tidings,* the Reformed Mennonite quarterly paper, was published at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It contained an article by A. M., of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which the Sterling brethren considered very fine and is therefore given here.[5]

"There is very little known by the public in general, of the principles of these people, who are often objects of criticism on account of their peculiarities. This criticism usually arises, however, from an incorrect knowledge of their Christian sentiments; and the why and wherefore, of some of their views, may be interesting. Among their peculiarities are church purity and unity, non-resistance, detachment or separation from the vain pursuits, pleasures, and fashions of the world; and also from all forms of worship not in harmony with the doctrine taught by the Son of God and His Apostles.

"They claim true Christianity to be the result of a divine power or principle begotten within the soul, by the combined influence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; without which no person having reached the years of discretion, can consistently claim an interest in the heavenly inheritance.

"They further claim, that wherever this heavenly influence is brought to bear upon the human heart, its effect will be the same—in accordance with the principles of unity so plainly taught by the Son of God and His Apostles. This unity was practically demonstrated when the Church of Christ was first established, on the day of Pentecost when 'the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.'

---

[5] This article is copied from the reprinted article in *Good Tidings,* Vol. III, No. 1, July, 1924, pp. 3-7.

This paper is not to be confused with that of the same name published by the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ, later changed to *Zion's Tidings* when combined with the Defenseless Mennonite paper, the *Zion's Call.*

"We find conclusive evidence that this unity was designed to exist amongst Christ's followers and in His church, in Christ's prayer to His heavenly Father, in (John XVII): 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' Evidently the unity of Christ's followers was ever to be a means to convince the world that He was the Redeemer.

"It is further claimed by the Reformed Mennonites, that Christ has, through all the dark ages of the world, preserved unto Himself a people—a church—a kingdom on earth; which amidst all the persecutions of her apostate enemies, has maintained this unity, and the doctrine of Christ in its purity, up to the present time, in fulfillment of the prophecies of old, relative to Christ and His kingdom, that 'He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Christ said, 'upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

"In the Martyrs' Mirror we find on page 353 (283 old edition) that 'Mention is made in this (16th) century, not only of the Waldenses, but also of certain churches at Thessalonica, in Greece, which are declared to have remained unchanged in faith from the days of Christ;' and on page 354 (284 old edition) 'They stated further, that the church of God had remained unchanged in faith from the time of the Apostles; and that they still preserved in good condition the letters which the apostle Paul wrote to them with his own hands.'

"In J. N. Brown's Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, as given by Reinerius, who admits the Paulicians, Peterines and some others, to be identical in principles and faith with the Waldenses, he says: 'Of all the sects which have been or now exist, none is more injurious to the church of Rome than the Waldenses. First, because it is more ancient. Some aver their existence from the days of Pope Sylvester; others, from the very time of the Apostles. Second, because it is so universal. There is scarcely any country into which this sect has not crept. Third, because all other heretics excite horror by the greatness of their blasphemies against God; but these have a great appearance of piety, as they live justly before man, believe rightly all things concerning God, are opposed to the Church of Rome, and in their accusations are easily believed by the people.' Such a concession, from such a source, speaks volumes. Here, then, is a succession of faithful men, whose apostolic origin, perpetuity, universal (though oft hidden) diffusion, general orthodoxy, evangelical simplicity, and sanctity of character, is admitted by the church of Rome herself; and in all this long and dark history it has maintained a true and faithful adherence to the primitive principles of Christianity, testifying against all forms of worship not in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. These are they that have kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

"Peter Waldo is generally supposed to have been the founder of the so-called Waldensian church. History, however, does not sanction this supposition. Waldo labored in the cause, but the Waldensian church was only a link in perpetuating the principles and doctrines of Christ. So may we also say of Menno Simons, from whom the Reformed Mennonites derive their name, and who continue the succession, unity and principles of the true church of Christ, of which there shall be no end.

"This may appear assumptive in defense of the Reformed Mennonites, but as the retention and practice of the pure principles of godliness as revealed in the doctrine of Christ is the only evidence of the true succession of His church, and as Christ said: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; and no man cometh unto the Father but by me;' and Paul says, 'If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his,' it is very evident that the possession of the Holy Spirit is a necessary qualification for church membership; and the church of Christ can be composed only of truly converted and enlightened individuals: those who possess and obey the love of God, which is shed abroad in the hearts of all true believers by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them.

"Christ said: 'The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name; he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you, and when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all Truth.' To suppose that this Spirit of truth would teach different principles at different ages in the Christian Era, would be charging confusion to God Himself and would be antagonistic to the prayer of the Son of God, and the instructions of His Apostles, and inconsistent with the order of heaven. Consequently, the Reformed Mennonites in their sincere regard for the true principles of Christianity, claim that the true church of Christ is a united body, born of one spirit, bound by the inseparable compact of Godly love into an association, where 'all are perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment;' adhering closely to the primitive principles of Christianity, as defined in the doctrine of Christ.

"They do not expect to be saved by their adherence to the outward form of religion; but firmly believe that external works are the effects of regeneration.

"Christ said: 'If a man love me he will keep my words.' Consequently, they claim that whosoever does not keep Christ's commands, manifests thereby that he does not love Christ, but is unconverted; controlled by the spirit of self; unfitted for church membership; and has no ground for a hope of final acceptance; and also, that the true church of Christ ever has kept, now does, and will continue to keep His commands for 'He that sayeth he knoweth or loveth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'

"A careful investigation of the teachings of Christ, would lead us to the conclusion, that he places the human family into two classes, the converted and the unconverted; and into two kingdoms, the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of Christ.

"In the kingdom of this world the sword is used to overcome evil, but Christ commands the subjects of His kingdom, not to resist evil, but to overcome evil with good. He teaches that there are but two ways. The strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life, and the broad way which leads to destruction.

"The Word of God has so plainly set forth the impossibility of blending these two kingdoms or ways, that no one should be influenced by his worldly feelings to doubt the truth of it. Christ said: 'My kingdom is not of this world;' 'ye are not of this world;' 'I have chosen you out of the world;' and Paul says: 'Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God.'

"These views are strictly adhered to by the Reformed Mennonites, and are considered by many as being quite shortsighted and peculiar. However, if the children of God are called out of this world, and are to prove the good, perfect and acceptable will of God by a non-conformity thereto, how can they at the same time take an active part in all the vain pleasures and pursuits indulged in by the worldly minded, figure actively in political strife and contention, and tender their service to whatever the goddess of fashion may dictate, when it is clearly demonstrated by the holy scriptures, that those who engage in these things are obeying the god of this world, and not the God of Heaven?

"In this age of temporal prosperity, advance of intellectual attainment, rapid progress in the arts and sciences, and the almost unparalleled attainment of temporal and national glory, it is a question whether the simplicity of the religion of Jesus Christ is not being superseded by a form of godliness, which is more in harmony with this world, than with the doctrine of Christ.

"Let us imagine ourselves as having set out in this so-called Christian age, in search of that 'holy nation, royal priesthood, and peculiar people,' of whom the Lord has said: 'I have chosen you out of the world; ye are no more of the world, but prove ye the acceptable will of God by a non-conformity thereto; and where would we find them? Certainly not in deadly conflict with each other on the field of battle; certainly not in political strife and contention; not in our social gatherings and festivities, where vain amusements are more sought after than Godly piety; and we might also say, not in our popular churches where the devotees of the goddess of fashion are more numerous than humble hearts; but alone among those who have been called by grace from the broad way of worldly pleasures to the narrow way of self-denial; who have renounced the kingdom of this world and yielded themselves to the service of Christ, and willingly bear His cross and the reproach of the worldly minded.

"Christ said—'If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments,' also 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.' The Reformed Mennonites claim that this love to God and our fellowman is the only principle which man can receive to fit him for heaven, and that this principle is shed abroad in the heart of the true believer by the Holy Spirit, and constrains him to obey all the commandments of Christ and the Apostles. They also claim that this divine principle is the controlling influence in the true church of Christ and prevents the existence therein of strife, litigation, jealousy, slander, envy, hatred, revenge and animosity; and that the true church of Christ is a united body, as Paul says: 'Fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you.' Believing this, the Reformed Mennonites cannot consistently and conscientiously participate in any form of worship that is not in harmony with the principles, purity, and simplicity, of the doctrine of Christ; but wish it distinctly understood that they are led to this alone from a sacred regard and reverence for the Word of God, as revealed by the Son, as the last and conclusive will and testament of the Father. In accordance with these views, they believe it to be the will of God that the Church of Christ shall be as 'a city that is set upon a hill which cannot be hid,' that in case of soul-sickness or disgust at the vanities of earth, or moved by grace to a desire for a triumphant immortality, the poor penitent should have no difficulty in deciding who God's people are, or where the spiritual ark of safety is, in which alone is security against the day when the elements will melt with fervent heat and a fiery wave shall usher in the closing scene."

CHAPTER LVIII

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES

The Summerfield Congregation[1]

The beginning of the settlement of Mennonites in St. Clair County, Illinois, dates back to 1842. Among the earliest families to come into the settlement, if not indeed the first family to settle there, was that of Jacob Baer, who with his wife were the grandparents and great-grandparents of the present members of the same name in the congregation. He with his family settled on what was known as the Ridge Prairie which lies near the present town of Troy and north of O'Fallon. Following these first settlers came the Bergdolt, Berger, Brandt, Greubler, Heer, Hirschler, Hirstein, Kraemer, Krehbiel, Pletcher, Ruth, Wittmer, and other families so that in the course of ten years the settlement extended over an area from fifteen miles northwest to eight miles southeast of Summerfield. These families came largely from the vicinity of Franklin, Lee County, Iowa. Some came directly from their homes in Germany.

Those early days were days of the pioneers. They endured the usual hardships and inconveniences incident to pioneering. They settled, some on the then raw prairies, and others according to their liking on the more wooded land. Along the streams there was at that time considerable woodland. Here they put up their rude log houses.

---

[1] Material from interview with A. S. Bechtel, Summerfield, Illinois; *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac,* 1925, p. 43 ff; Krehbiel, *History of the Mennonite General Conference.*

Characteristic of the hardy stock from whence they sprung, they began to conquer the virgin soil and make for themselves and their children homes of substance and comfort.

In the course of several years, those in the northwest section moved nearer to Summerfield, until at the present time none of the members of the congregation are living in that section. With a few exceptions the present membership lives within five miles of the church house.

In the early days provision was made for religious worship among the scattered group. The first services were held in the home of John Kraemer, one of the earliest settlers. Then arrangements were made for holding services every four weeks alternating between the northwest and the southeast sections of the settlement. The services in the northwest section were held in a school house. The first person to conduct religious services and preach the Gospel was Christian Detwiler. The first regular preacher among the group was Johann Schmidt[2] who alternated between the two preaching places.

In the year 1858 a brick church building was erected on a little slope just south of the village of Summerfield. This was dedicated on January 23, 1859. The congregation, though not as yet fully organized, called Rev. Daniel Hege from West Point, Iowa, to become the pastor. He accepted the call and soon after took up his work in the local congregation.

On April 1, 1861, the congregation was fully organized. The members showed their foresight in adopting at that date a good, comprehensive, and workable constitution, which was signed by about seventy-five charter members. This new congregation again showed its wisdom in affiliating at once with the new movement which soon developed into the General Conference of Mennonites of North America. It was one of the most active in furthering this movement. Hege, the pastor, attended the second meeting of the General Conference held at Wadsworth, Ohio, in 1861, and was made secretary of the conference. This was the session at which it was decided to open a Mennonite school at Wadsworth, Ohio. Hege was prevailed upon to serve as Home Missionary and visit the congregations of the Conference and solicit funds for this proposed school. He began this special task in May, 1862. The burden was a heavy one and the travel, preaching, soliciting among the people, explaining the proposed work, and convincing them of its real value, severely taxed his strength. He visited the churches in Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Canada, and Pennsylvania. He was taken ill on his return from Iowa. On December 30, 1862, he ended his rather short but useful life.

---

[2] Schmidt's biography. Johann Schmidt (1795—1870) of Summerfield, Illinois, was the pioneer bishop of the St. Clair congregation of Mennonites. He was born in Bavaria, where he was ordained as bishop in the Mennonite Church in 1834. In 1856 he emigrated to St. Clair County, Illinois, and served what is now the General Conference Congregation of Mennonites at that place until his death.

When the Mennonites were about to emigrate from Russia an aid committee known as the Board of Guardians composed of representatives of several branches of Mennonites was formed at the 1873 district conference session held at Summerfield. David Goertz then of Summerfield was its secretary. This board gave valuable assistance to the immigrants.

The congregation prospered materially and spiritually and grew in numbers until 1875. Then for about five years following a large number of the members moved westward and settled around Halstead, Kansas. One of the pastors Rev. Christian Krehbiel, with his large family went there in 1879. Thus the Summerfield Congregation furnished the beginning of the Halstead Congregation. This migration greatly weakened the congregation numerically. Since that time the congregation has had a steady, though at times slow growth.

In 1911, the congregation felt it advisable to purchase the Methodist church house in the town. This was done and some alterations were made, including the building of a bell tower. The old building in which the congregation had worshiped since 1859, was abandoned and razed. The building in town is in use to-day. During 1925, it was newly painted without and within and electric lights installed so that the congregation is quite comfortably housed in the present building.

The congregation, feeling the need of a Sunday School, organized this branch of the church activity in 1865. In the course of time a Women's Missionary Society was organized. This society is doing useful work in behalf of the conference mission work. In 1890 Christian Endeavor work was taken up and later a Junior Christian Endeavor was added.

The congregation early took an active interest in foreign mission work. It was from this congregation that the first missionary, S. S. Haury, came. The local congregation had a large part in helping Haury prepare himself for the missionary task. He arrived at Darlington, Indian Territory, on May 22, 1880 to take up the work among the Indians. In 1886 Jacob and Mary Leisy from the congregation gave the first large gift—a thousand dollars—for independent conference mission work.

The following ministers have served the congregation: Daniel Hege, 1861; Johann Schmidt, 1856-1870; Daniel Hirschler, 1862; Jacob E. Krehbiel, 1863-1890; Christian Krehbiel, 1864-1879; C. H. A. van der Smissen, 1890-1911; J. B. Baer, 1911-1918; (Assistants, P. J. Boehr, Edmund Kauffman); P. J. Boehr, 1918-1919; Mr. Plassman and other student supply from Eden Seminary, 1919-1920; G. T. Soldner, 1920-1923; and A. S. Bechtel, since 1923.

The Formation of the General Conference[3]

Since the Summerfield congregation with its active pastor[4] was so closely identified with the formation of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America it is necessary to devote some space to the origin of that conference which became a separate branch of the Mennonite denomination.

Great movements frequently owe much of their success to the efforts and abilities of a single individual. This is true of the movement among some of the Mennonites in America for a General Conference. This movement was pioneered by John H. Oberholzer, and no other man has done as much as he to create and develop the spirit of unity in the Mennonite denomination.

John H. Oberholzer was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania, on January 10, 1809. His parents, Abraham and Susan (Hunsberger) Oberholzer, were farmers by occupation, and descendants of the early Mennonite settlers in Pennsylvania. They readily permitted their son to take advantage of the meager educational facilities the country then afforded. As he was fond of study, he made rapid progress, and when but sixteen years old, he began to teach. He followed this profession for fifteen years.

The school year being short and the pay small, Oberholzer was forced to follow an additional occupation. He learned the locksmith's trade by which he supported himself for about thirty years. His ministerial services as well as his later journalistic enterprise were causes of expense rather than sources of income to him. He became very skilful in his trade and his locks found ready sale. In many dwellings erected at that time are still found some of the German locks manufactured by Oberholzer.

---

[3] Material chiefly from Krehbiel, *History of the General Conference of Mennonites,* much taken over unchanged.

[4] See Hege and Krehbiel biographies in the biographical appendix.

While yet young he had united with the Swamp Mennonite church. He was in the prime of life when, in 1842, this church chose him as co-pastor to their aged minister, Samuel Musselman. When the latter died but a few years later, the whole charge fell to Oberholzer. He entered upon this calling with fervor, devoting himself to the work without receiving any pecuniary assistance, as was then the custom. He was a fluent and fascinating speaker and his popularity soon spread beyond his own church and denomination.

Oberholzer's life throughout was marked by action. As teacher he had learned to appreciate the value of instruction and training. On entering upon the ministry, he began at once to employ pedagogical methods in his church work. He introduced catechetical instruction for young people applying for admission to the church, and later on succeeded in inducing other churches to do the same. To aid in this work he re-published in 1848 a catechism formerly used among the Mennonites in Canada. Later on this catechetical instruction, which was given on Sundays, was made more general, all children being taken in, and thus this work gradually developed into a Sunday School, one of the early Mennonite Sunday Schools.

In his efforts to upbuild his church, he keenly felt the need of communication with and the help of others in the same work, especially such help as could be secured through a church periodical. He also clearly saw the potent influence for good, which such a paper could be made to exert if made the ally of the pulpit. But nothing of the kind then existed among Mennonites. Recognition of the need meant to Oberholzer effort to satisfy it. Accordingly, with a sublime heroism, he purchased with his own hard-earned and much needed money a printing press and set it up in his locksmith shop at Milford Square. After learning how to set type, he undertook in addition to his ministerial and business duties to publish a paper. He did all the work himself. He was author, editor, compositor, and printer. It required herculean efforts to accomplish all he had undertaken.

Of this work he at one place says that not infrequently he labored whole nights in the printing office without allowing himself any sleep, that he might supply the people with Christian literature. His paper, of which the first number appeared June 9, 1852, at Milford Square, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, he called *Religioeser Botschafter.* As this is the first Mennonite church paper published in this country, credit is also due to Oberholzer for having led the way in Mennonite journalism.[5] He continued his editorial work on this paper until 1868, though its name was changed in 1855 to *Christliches Volksblatt,* and in 1863 to *Mennonitischer Friedensbote.* In 1881 the paper was merged with *Zur Heimath* to become *Christlicher Bundesbote* as which it has since regularly appeared as the German organ of the General Conference of Mennonites.

Soon after Oberholzer entered the ministry, he saw that the ministerial meetings, held by Mennonite ministers of that section, were barren of good results, largely because of lack of system and aim, and because no records were kept. In order to improve this situation, he drew up a constitution, and in 1847 submitted it for consideration to the meeting of ministers, known as the Franconia Conference (Pennsylvania). It was a bold thing to do and his method of procedure was doubtless somewhat rash. The conference, fearing the proposed constitution as an innovation, refused at two successive sessions even to consider it. By a majority vote they "set back" Oberholzer together with sixteen other ministers who had supported the plan until such time as the "offenders" would recant. This, of course, they refused for they felt no guilt of error. The whole affair is so complicated that it is difficult to determine the fundamental reason for the division.

---

[5] For comparison with John F. Funk's work, see Chap. XXIX.

When Oberholzer and the others saw themselves thus excluded, they determined to organize under the rejected constitution. This they did on October 8, 1847. Oberholzer continued for many years the leading spirit of this organization, now known as the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference of Mennonites. He was permitted to see this work thoroughly established and greatly increased, so that it has become by far the most progressive element in the Mennonite life of eastern Pennsylvania.

Oberholzer had at no time desired separation, and at all times, after being isolated, had sought to restore unity. In this direction he made a special effort, in 1860, by publishing a little book, in which he gives a partial account of his life, gives reasons why his excommunication should not have occurred, and in a most Christian and loving spirit makes overtures for a restoration of fraternal relations. It was called *Der Wahre Character von John H. Oberholzer*. He wanted harmony and coöperation—not division.

In the meantime independent unification movements had been developing elsewhere in America. Under its own leadership a rather indefinite conference had been formed which may be referred to as the Canada-Ohio Conference. In 1857, it passed a resolution looking towards coöperation with the Pennsylvania brethren. Under the influence of Daniel Krehbiel the Iowa churches newly established at West Point and Franklin Prairie were brought together in 1859. This meeting passed some far reaching and ambitious resolutions in regard to the unification of all Mennonite congregations. A general invitation was given for all the Mennonite Churches to send representatives to a union meeting in Iowa.

The first General Conference was accordingly held at West Point, Lee County, Iowa, May 28, 29, 1860. The greater part of the first days was devoted to religious services. The people attended in large numbers. The many outsiders in addition to almost all the members of the two churches filled the good-sized church to overflowing. They were attracted by the unusualness of the occasion. The plan to effect a union of all Mennonites was something entirely new. People flocked to the meeting in great expectancy. In order to gratify the demand thus expressed, three sermons were delivered in the forenoon and two in the afternoon, the visiting ministers of course being given particular prominence. Undoubtedly in all these speeches fraternity and unity formed the chief topic. Judging from later references to this meeting a deep moving of the spirit was felt at the time.

Though really only a preliminary meeting, it is called the first General Conference. Apparently in itself it was quite insignificant, but it had a large bearing on future events. The results achieved by the first conference were a great gain for the cause of union. Never before had a workable scheme been devised in this country by which all Mennonites could be united. What made the result still more significant was the very fact that it had been brought about through the coöperation of representatives from sections which were distant from each other, which differed greatly in external matters and had heretofore not been in touch with each other. The participants were from two main sections: first, three churches in Iowa, namely, Zion, West Point, and Polk City, which were alike in that they were situated in the west and had recently immigrated from Germany; second, the Pennsylvania churches, Oberholzer and Loux being the representatives.

At the appointed time, May 20, 1861, the second conference convened at Wadsworth, Ohio. As in the previous year spiritual fellowship was cultivated by special services preceding the conference. From eight different churches visitors had come as follows: 1. Zion, Iowa. 2. West Point, Iowa. 3. Wadsworth, Ohio. 4. West Swamp, Pennsylvania. 5. East Swamp, Pennsylvania. 6. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 7. Summerfield, Illinois. 8. Waterloo, Canada. This, indeed, was but a small number to inaugurate the movement which was hoped would ultimately embrace all the Mennonites of America. Persons living at great distances from each other and differing much in external matters met to join in a common cause. Here were Germans lately immigrated, Pennsylvania Germans, and some nearly English. Peculiarities of different nationalities and sections as well as of various antecedents were noticeable. From north, east, and west representatives were present. Even in matters of dress, customs, and practices, there were strong contrasts.

Among those present may be noted some additions over the previous year. The two churches from Canada and Ohio were members of the before-mentioned Canada-Ohio Conference. Thus that movement was allying itself as least in part with the larger one. The Summerfield congregation of Illinois was closely related to the Iowa churches in character and history. The three sections which had heretofore labored independently were represented as one at this meeting. However in uniting in the General Conference the formerly existing societies were not discontinued. The conference in Pennsylvania, mentioned before, has continued its specific work until the present time and functions as a district of the General Conference. The Canada-Ohio Conference kept up its sessions for about ten years longer when it was discontinued. The accession of these churches was a substantial gain for the Conference, not only in members but particularly in working force. The Canada-Ohio Conference had capable leaders, and from Summerfield there came then and later men to whose ability, wisdom, and labors is attributable to a great extent the successful development of the conference. In organizing the conference the new additions were recognized by selecting Daniel Hoch of Canada as chairman, and Daniel Hege of Summerfield as secretary.

In the resolutions of the conference the greatest prominence was given to the school question. This prominent position was held by this cause for a number of years, the interest of the churches as also the deliberations of the conference all centering in this one issue. The school drew the general attention from minor matters to itself and held it long enough for the amalgamation of the various elements and until the union was sufficiently perfected and strengthened to endure even under severe trials.

The third conference was held at Summerfield, Illinois, October 19-24, 1863, with fourteen churches represented. The matter of establishing the school at Wadsworth, Ohio seems to have been its chief concern.

The fourth conference was held following the dedicatory services at the Wadsworth School, October 15-19, 1866. This was the first time that all delegates came provided with credentials from their churches. Now for the first time the conference was formally organized by presentation of credentials. Eighteen delegates were present, as follows: B. B. Baumann, S. B. Baumann, Ephraim Hunsberger, S. G. Klemmer, Christian Krehbiel, D. Krehbiel, J. C. Krehbiel, M. Lehman, Jacob Leisy, A. O. Moyer, L. S. Moyer, Jonas Neisz, J. H. Oberholzer, Jacob Risser, L. O. Schimmel, D. Schneider, A. D. Shelly, and Christian Showalter. These delegates represented the following thirteen churches: Waterloo, Ontario; Lincoln County, Ontario; Summerfield, Illinois; Zion, Iowa; West Point, Iowa; Wadsworth, Ohio; Salem, Ohio; and Pennsylvania from the Boyerton, Hereford, East Swamp, West Swamp, Philadelphia, and Springfield churches. Thus the General Conference had become definitely organized. Although the conference made progress, it suffered at times severe internal dissensions, such that at one time great fear was expressed that it would dissolve. However it was able to weather all the storms.

Western District Conference

The immediate purpose of the meeting held in Iowa in 1859 had been to arrange for carrying on home missionary work in that section of the country. On that occasion some one had been detailed to attend to that work. In the years following, that small and originally local movement had however gradually expanded into a far reaching and general cause which no longer concerned itself with the local interests of any one section. By and by however, when the local demands for assistance became more and more persistent, it dawned upon those interested that the General Conference, their own child, could no longer serve their local needs. It was discovered that they must again form an organization through which to satisfy the demands arising in the local district.

After the situation was once fully realized the matter soon came to a head. A conference of the western churches was called in 1868. The first session of the Western District Conference began October 4, in Zion Church, Iowa, in the same church in which the first General Conference was held. Since the meeting is of historic interest, the preamble to the minutes of that meeting is quoted:

"For several years past there was felt among us deep pity for, and sympathy with, the condition of many of our brethren in the north and west who have become isolated and are without the necessary spiritual care. Because of this feeling it has repeatedly been a question with us whether love did not require it of us to supply these brethren with at least some of the crumbs from the tables of our organized churches and to encourage and edify them in their isolation.

"This matter had been brought under consideration in Iowa and found considerable support. In order, however, to be able to discharge this obligation, a conference was proposed of as many churches as would care to share in this work of love. Accordingly we extended an invitation to all churches known to us and situated within a certain distance."

Five churches responded to this invitation. Plainly the object was to form an organization through which to carry on home missionary work, for all resolutions adopted concerned themselves with this subject. Two home missionaries were chosen, Christian Krehbiel of Summerfield, Illinois, for the southwest, and John C. Krehbiel of West Point, Iowa, for the northwest. They were to devote a portion of their time to this work and as compensation should receive two dollars per day and expenses. This spirit of sacrifice is quite remarkable for at the very time that these few small churches were undertaking this additional work they were also the most liberal supporters of the conference school and the Java mission of the European Mennonites. They have furnished an example of self-denying service which is worthy of being studied and imitated. The Western District Conference has continued in existence to the present time and now includes churches in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

The Chicago Mission

The General Conference Mennonites began mission work in Chicago in 1915. The work was started as a

Rescue Mission by holding its first session on the evening of March fifth. These meetings were continued every night until the work was changed into a church extension mission and relocated about three miles away at 7130 South Ashland Avenue. The first session at the new location was held on the Sunday afternoon of May 16, 1916, with forty-five present, many of whom were members of other Sunday Schools and came because of the afternoon session. The work was continued until the hall became too small. Another change was made in October, 1917. The new location was in a larger, more convenient hall one-half block south on Ashland Avenue. Here the workers were privileged and delighted to see an increase numerically and spiritually until this hall was too small to accommodate those who came. Then by a hurried arrangement a suitable chapel was erected at Seventy-third and Laflin Streets, on ground that had been purchased several years previous. In this vicinity the numbers have steadily grown to nearly two hundred, with an average attendance for the year of over one hundred and forty.

W. W. Miller was the first superintendent and pastor, with Mrs. Miller and Miss Cassie Niswander as assistants. The present superintendent (1929) is W. C. Rhea. The members have been organized into a congregation known as "The First Mennonite Church of Chicago," a rather presumptuous name in view of the fact that it is one of the youngest of the Mennonite Missions. At the present time the church is less a mission station than a city congregation.

CHAPTER LIX

THE MENNONITES FROM RUSSIA

Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America

The Brighton Mission Chapel[1]

The Brighton Mission Chapel had an unofficial beginning in the Spring of 1907, at the corner of Hoyne Avenue and Thirty-third Street, Chicago, under the name of the Hoyne Avenue Mission. This work was in charge of A. F. and Mrs. Wiens with Sarah Kroeker as assistant. A. H. Leaman of the (old) Mennonite Home Mission was actively interested in this work. His name was carried as General Superintendent for a time. After a year of labor at this place, the hall proved too small. In May, 1908 the mission was moved to Oakley Avenue and Thirty-fifth Street, receiving at the time a new name, "Mennonite Rescue Mission." For four years the work was carried on at this place. Up to this time the buildings had only been rented, which of course is not favorable to building up permanent mission work. A few brethren had the courage to buy a building at 3404 South Oakley Avenue. Later this building became the property of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren Conference.

In the meantime (1910) the Isaac Peters Churches in Nebraska and the Wall Church at Mountain Lake, Minnesota, had united into a conference under the name "Conference of Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America."[2] Mr. Wiens was a member of this group and money to carry on the mission work had been gathered among the members. Mr. and Mrs. Wiens provided much of the money themselves. After the conference was formed the station was taken over officially.

---

[1] Material from G. P. Schulz and A. F. Wiens, Chicago; files of *Zion's Tidings.*

On May 7, 1912, the hall was dedicated and the work was taken up with new zeal and energy. The first baptismal and communion service was held at the mission on December 8, 1912. Mr. and Mrs. Wiens labored faithfully at this Mission until June, 1916, when the Conference made a change in workers. Mr. and Mrs. George P. Schulz who had conducted the Happy Hour Mission[3] took charge on September 1, 1916. At this time the mission was renamed "Brighton Mission Chapel." The chapel was soon outgrown. Thus through the mission board, mission friends, and the members of the congregation it became possible for the Conference to buy an almost new brick church house, forty-four by sixty feet, at the corner of Lincoln Street and Thirty-fourth Place, one-half mile east of the old location. On November 9, 1919, the present quarters were occupied. The Sunday School has twenty-three classes. Other mission activities were taken up so that at the present time full mission work is being conducted by the present workers, Mr. and Mrs. G. P. Schulz.

The Mennonite Bible Mission

In December, 1917, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Wiens continued their missionary zeal by opening up another mission station, which they called "The Mennonite Bible Mission," located at 4215 South Rockwell Street, Chicago. This mission is located in a very needy field, especially for Sunday School work. In connection with the Sunday

---

[2] See Book I, Chap. V.

[3] See Book III, Chap. XLV.

School, other meetings are conducted such as children's meetings, young people's meetings, and open air meetings. They have given largely of their own means to support the work. The building was rebuilt and rededicated on October 19, 1924. A little paper is published quarterly to stimulate interest in the mission. The work is not conducted officially by the conference though some of its members give towards its support.

Coöperative Activities

When the Conference was formed in 1910, it began to publish its own paper *Der Evangelisations Bote.* Its English companion *Good Tidings,* whose first issue appeared on July 15, 1919, was combined in 1921, with the *Zion's Call* of the Defenseless Mennonites (Egly), becoming *Zion's Tidings.*[4] The paper is edited at present by G. P. Schulz, superintendent of the Brighton Mission Chapel.

The two Chicago Missions of this conference also coöperate with the Egly churches in Illinois in the annual Sunday School Convention.[5]

The missions coöperate with the other Mennonite missions in Chicago in a Quarterly Sunday School meeting.[6]

There is some agitation that the two Defenseless Conferences should unite into one body, but as yet no definite steps have been taken towards such union.

The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Work in Chicago[7]

From the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites living in the Crimean peninsula in South Russia, Jacob Wiebe gathered together a group[8] who favored the Brueder-Gemeinde Movement. He and his followers came to America in 1874. This group of Crimean Mennonite Brethren use the official title "Krimmer Mennonite Brethren." (However here the untranslated form "Krimmer Brueder" is used so as to avoid confusion with the "Bruedergemeinde" Mennonite Brethren from Russia and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ.)

---

[4] See Book III, Chap. XLIV.

[5] See Book III, Chap. XXXIX.

[6] See Book III, Chap. XLV.

[7] Material for this section from interview with D. M. Hofer, Chicago, Illinois.

Many efforts were put forth to get more information but all were fruitless.

The Krimmer Brueder Conference opened up both mission and publishing work in Chicago in 1915. Rev. D. M. Hofer, who was then a student at the Moody Institute, had in the practical work become convinced of the absolute necessity and also the possibility of city mission work. He saw that there was a great need in Chicago. Rev. Joseph W. Tschetter, who that year came to Chicago from North Carolina where he was active in the mission work among the colored people, was of the same opinion. With the consent of their Conference a Gospel Mission was opened at 2812 Lincoln Avenue, in July, 1915. The Sunday School has an average attendance of about 150, composed of fourteen classes. The workers are Rev. and Mrs. D. M. Hofer, Rev. and Mrs. Joseph W. Tschetter, and Misses Mary and Susie Thiessen.

In November, 1913 the Krimmer Conference in session at Jansen, Nebraska, recommended the publication of a church paper. A committee was elected to investigate the matter and if favorable to start the paper. Rev. Joseph W. Tschetter, in December, 1914, made an evangelistic tour and everywhere he went he advocated the starting of a paper. It was finally decided to start a weekly paper in connection with the mission work in Chicago. Rev. D. M. Hofer, the brother-in-law of Rev. J. W. Tschetter, was to aid him. On July 28, 1915 the first issue of *Der Wahrheitsfreund,* as it was named by Tschetter, was printed. Two thousand copies were sent out as samples. In a short time there were enough subscriptions to establish the paper, which became the official organ of the Krimmer Brueder. With the exception of the first three years when Rev. M. B. Fast was editor, Rev. D. M. Hofer has been editor and Rev. J. W. Tschetter assistant editor. Still printed in the German language, it is widely read in Russian Mennonite circles in Europe and America. Its circulation is 5,500. The printing press is housed in the same building with the mission and workers. Numerous pamphlets, books, and papers for the Krimmer and other branches are printed on the press.

---

[8] See Book I, Chap. V, No. 21; diagram p. 46.

CONCLUSION

The entire span of Mennonite history in Illinois has now been covered. It has not been a complete story but rather a compilation of several narratives, grouped together for two reasons,—namely, geographical location within the territorial limits of a commonwealth, and common origin in Europe before the year 1693. Some of the branches have no more vital relation to each other at the present time than just these two points.

Though Mennonites were scattered in a few other places in Illinois, settlements were made in eighteen counties namely: Bureau, Champaign, Coles, Cook, Douglas, Fayette, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Livingston, McLean, Moultrie, Peoria, Shelby, St. Clair, Stephenson, Tazewell, Whiteside, and Woodford. In all there have been seventy-nine congregations and institutions. Eight of these are extinct. Excluding the Missionary Church Association and the Christian Apostolic (New Amish) and considering the Amish-Mennonites and (old) Mennonites as one body there are at the present time nine branches in Illinois with forty congregations, eleven missions, two Old People's Homes, one Orphanage, one Publishing House, one Sanitarium, making a total of fifty-six congregations and institutions.

It is impossible to give a general estimate of the Mennonites of Illinois and their bearing upon Mennonitism in general. To adequately judge, it would be necessary to consider each branch separately. And again, judgment depends upon the point of view of the one passing judgment. A non-Mennonite, a member of another branch, an ex-Mennonite, a civil authority, an army lieutenant, a banker, a member in good standing, and a stranger might represent views varying from the extremes of blind favoritism to severe condemnation. In the matter of morals and common virtues and basic evangelical Christianity however all would agree that the Mennonites are all a great asset to their communities.

The branches now in Illinois are likely to exist for many years in their present forms. They are assured of an increase in membership as they retain their youth. They will grow little by additions from without. Some institutional work will be added but nothing startling is likely to take place. A steady progress in spiritual growth and activity may be prophesied. May their career during the next century manifest increasing devotion to the truth of God and the spreading of His Kingdom among men.

APPENDIX I

NOTES ON THE EARLIEST MENNONITE SETTLERS IN ILLINOIS

On pages 78 and 79 the names of the first Mennonite settlers in Illinois are given by Dr. Weber as Peter Maurer (1829), John Strubhar and Nicholas Maurer (1830), David Schertz and father, Christian Roggy and daughters, Joseph Rusche and sisters, Jacob Auer, Peter Beck, Joe Belsley and John Engel (all in 1831). The extended table of early settlers which is given on pages 86-91 continues this list of early settlers down to 1852.

Somewhat different reports regarding the earliest settlers are contained in articles published in the publication of the German-American Historical Society of Illinois, entitled *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblaetter, Vierteljahrschrift herausgegeben von der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois, Chicago, Ill.* In volume 4, pp. 1-25 (July, 1904) Emil Mannhardt contributes an article entitled "Die Deutschen in McLean County und Bloomington." On page 1 he states that the first German immigrants into McLean County were Jacob Donner and Johann Schoenbeck who came to Dry Grove Township, and Johann Strupphar who settled in Danvers Township, all of them being Alsatians and Mennonites who came in the beginning of the year 1829. Of the three named, Weber lists only John Strubhar as having come in 1830, a year later than Mannhardt claims. On the other hand Mannhardt knew nothing of the Maurers, and Weber knew nothing of Schoenbeck. Weber lists a Jacob Danner as having settled in 1837. Mannhardt must be in error because he states later on that Donner was born in 1820 and had first come to Canada and Ohio from Europe in 1836 (!). In regard to Schoenbeck Mannhardt says that he had been born in Europe in 1811, came to McLean County direct, but soon left for Ohio and Kentucky and did not return for permanent settlement in McLean County until 1858. Schoenbeck, according to Mannhardt, married Elizabeth Schertz in Ohio. Strupphar is said to have married Anna Schertz in 1839 after a license had been issued to him and Elizabeth Landis. He is said to have arrived in Illinois unmarried, accompanied by several sisters, one of whom, Magdalena, was married to Christian Farney by John Naffziger in 1840. Jonas Troyer is also said to have come in 1839. Weber lists a Jonas Troyer in 1851.

Mannhardt gives further reports about early settlers in this region in volume 5, pp. 1-62 (October, 1905) in an article entitled *Gemeinde-Chronologie. Chronologische Darstellung der aeusseren Entwickelung des religioesen Lebens unter den Deutschen in Illinois.* On page 5 he states that Johann Engel, an Alsatian Mennonite, came to Metamora Township, Woodford County, in 1829, and that John's brother, Peter Engel, with two stepsons named Verkler, came to the same community in 1831 accompanied by a certain John Brickler. The father, Christian Engel, is said to have come in 1839. The only other name given by Mannhardt is that of Johann Schmidt, a Mennonite, who came in 1833. A comparison of these reports with Weber's data, shows that John Engel is supposed to have come in 1831, while Peter Engel and the Verklers, together with Christian Engel the father, came in 1833. John Brickler is unknown to Weber (the name is altogether un-Mennonite). Weber likewise fails to list a Johann Schmidt, although he lists a Christian Schmidt as having come in 1833.

The variations between Weber and Mannhardt are considerable, but in view of the fact that Mannhardt was only a Chicago journalist with no personal acquaintance with the Mennonites or their history, it seems probable that he must have based his statements on unreliable sources. That he did no personal research in the field is indicated by the fact that the article mentioned above, which is an attempt at a religious history of the early German settlements in Illinois, fails to list the date of establishment of a single Mennonite congregation in Illinois, although many of them were established during the time covered in his survey. In fact he mentions but one Mennonite congregation, the one in Metamora Township, Woodford County, and then only to state that he did not know the time of its organization.

An interesting bit of reminiscence regarding early Mennonite settlers in central Illinois is found in volume 1, pp. 12-14, in an article entitled "Alte Deutsche Ansiedler in Woodford und McLean County" by H. E. Sieberns. Sieberns had conducted a general store in Farnisville (Slabtown) in Woodford County, 1858-1864, and in Gridley, Livingston County, 1864-1884. The translation of the part of his reminiscences bearing on the Mennonites is as follows.

"The region about Farnisville on the Mackinaw river was settled almost entirely by Germans, many of whom had been there for as long as twenty years (before 1858-1864). They were almost exclusively Mennonites (Amish, as they were usually called), who had immigrated from Bavaria, Rhenish Bavaria, Switzerland, Wuerttemberg, Baden, Alsace, and Lorraine. They were good farmers and otherwise fine people, most all of whom attained prosperity and many of whom became wealthy. Among them I will name Christian, Jacob, Peter and George Zehr with several children; John Ehresmann, Christian Ropp, John Ropp, Christian and Peter Farni, Michael Koenig, Henry Hodel, Nicholas Maurer, Jacob Schantz, John Klopfenstein, Benjamin Schlegel, Wm. Niergarth, Christian Risser, Valentine Neuhauser, Peter Ulrich, Ludwig Ulrich, Christian Augsburger, John Reuber, Joseph and Andreas Salzmann, Christian Bechler, Christian Miller, Peter Sommer, Christian Rich, John Stalter, all farmers. Then there were also several Pennsylvanians among them, who also spoke only German, such as John Sharp, Lantz, Schantz, and others. . . .

"In the vicinity of Gridley the situation was similar. In the township in the southwest corner of Livingston County, Waldo Township, the Germans were in the majority. Children of the German settlers around Farnisville moved here, and we find the same names here as there. For instance, Ehresman, Mueller, Ulrich, Neuhauser, Klopfenstein, Schlegel, Sommer, Rich, Farni, etc. This township was called 'the German township' at that time. New settlers from Germany also settled here, such as: George Wurst, Heinrich Otto, John Lukert, John Stalter (who had first lived for several years in Tazewell County), Joseph Cloudon, John, Christian and Jacob Koenig who came from McLean County, and many others. Later several low Germans settled in this region."

A comparison of Sieberns' list with Weber's list shows that although Weber has many names listed which Sieberns fails to mention, nevertheless of Sieberns' 32 names, only 9 are on Weber's list. It is true that Weber's list extends down to only 1852, yet it is clear that the list is by no means exhaustive.

Another article in the *Geschichtsblaetter* which one would suppose at first glance should contain valuable material on the Mennonites is a lengthy article by Emil Mannhardt, entitled, "Die Aeltesten Deutschen Ansiedler in Illinois, nach Quellen und Persönlichen Ermittelungen." This article runs through four numbers, October, 1901, and January, April, and October, 1902.

However the only possible Mennonite name in the article is that of Jacob Albrecht, who is said to have settled in Bureau County (Tiskilwa), in 1836, as a Bavarian immigrant, born 1806 in Rhenish Bavaria, and "who became one of the big farmers and brewers of Princeton." Weber lists him as a settler of 1837.

That there were individual Mennonite settlers in central Illinois, who never identified themselves with the existing Amish or Mennonite congregations is indicated by several items of information found elsewhere in the *Geschichtsblaetter.* There was for instance Heinrich Funk, born March 23, 1823 near Bretten in Baden, son of a Mennonite preacher at that place named Christian Funk, married April 18, 1851 to a Mennonite girl, Magdalena Hege in the German Palatinate. He bought a farm nine miles northwest of Bloomington in October, 1852. The next year his father Christian Funk, the preacher, together with the entire family, wife, son Christian, Jr., and daughters, Christine and Magdalena, all came to join the son. In 1902 Heinrich Funk was still living. The story of Heinrich Funk is given in brief in the *Geschichtsblaetter* for April, 1902, volume 2, pp. 46-49, in an article by Dr. T. Häring entitled "Zwei Pioniere von McLean County, nach deren Mittheilungen niedergeschrieben."

It is interesting to note that Emil Mannhardt commented very favorably on C. Henry Smith's *Mennonites of America* when it appeared, and in the October, 1909, *Geschichtsblaetter* (volume 9, pp. 113-121), published a German translation of the entire section dealing with "Settlements in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the Western States." Mannhardt had included practically no references to the Mennonites in his lengthy production entitled *Deutsche und Deutsche Nachkommen in Illinois in den oestlichen Nord-Central-Staaten,* which was published as a *Beilage* to the *Geschichtsblaetter* during the years 1907-1909.

In concluding this presentation of material from the *Geschichtsblaetter,* it may be interesting to note that the founder and chief editor of the periodical, and the founder and secretary of the Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois from the beginning of the society to his death in 1911, was Heinrich Emil Mannhardt, son of the noted Mennonite preacher and pastor at Danzig, Jacob Mannhardt, founder of the *Mennonitische Blaetter.* A brief obituary and biography of Mannhardt is found in the number for July, 1911. According to this obituary, Mannhardt was born in 1841 at Danzig, came to the United States about 1866, and settled in 1872 in Chicago as a journalist. He died there April 18, 1911. He was not a Mennonite.

Goshen College, June, 1931.

Harold S. Bender.

APPENDIX II

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE MENNONITE MINISTERS OF ILLINOIS

THE ILLINOIS MENNONITE CONFERENCE*

HENRY VALENTINE ALBRECHT (1860-   )

Henry Valentine Albrecht was born February 14, 1860, near Arispie, Bureau County, Ill., the son of John Albrecht and Mary Ackerman, both of Bavaria, Germany. He was baptized by Bishop Joseph Schlegel in 1877 at the Willow Springs congregation near Tiskilwa. He was ordained as deacon by vote in 1891 at the Willow Springs church by Joseph Burcky. He was married in 1833 to Mary Stecker by Bishop Andrew Ropp. To this union were born the following children: Lydia, 1884; Lena, 1885; Eda, 1887; Alma, 1890; Julius, 1894; Silas, 1902; Amelia, 1904. Deacon Albrecht has been very active in the work of the church both in the Willow Springs congregation where he was a leader in Sunday School and young people's work and in support of general church activities. He was delegate to the General Conference once and visited the India Mission during the winter of 1924-1925 where his daughter, Alma, now Mrs. R. R. Smucker, is a missionary.

ANDREW BACHMAN (-1864)

Andrew Bachman emigrated to Illinois from Alsace in 1839 and located on a farm two miles west of Metamora. He had been ordained as a bishop in Alsace. During the Civil War he was the leading bishop of the Partridge congregation, and had to accompany to Springfield several of his members who had been drafted into the army but refused to serve because of conscientious scruples. Such were exempted by the Conscription Act of 1863 upon evidence that they were bona fide members of good standing in a non-resistant religious society.

---

*The list includes one non-minister, Melinda Ebersole, and several ministers from other districts who were influential in Illinois.

Joseph Bachman (1826-1897)

Joseph Bachman, son of Andrew, was born in 1826 in Alsace and emigrated with his father to Illinois in 1839. He was elected to the ministry by the Partridge congregation in 1852 and some years later was ordained bishop, which office he faithfully discharged until his death. Bachman never traveled much. He was a quiet, peaceable man, and conservative by nature. He had a good memory and frequently quoted long passages of scripture in his sermons.

Joseph Baecher (1853-1931)

Joseph Baecher was born in Alsace, France, March 31, 1853, a son of John Baecher and Barbara Ulrich. He was baptized in 1865 in Alsace by Joseph Moselman and Johannes Becher. He was ordained as minister in 1893 by vote of the East Bend church near Fisher, Ill. He was married in 1880 to Susanna Wincasovitz, and upon her death to Mary Oyer in 1886 by Jacob Zehr. Their children are: Emma, 1880; Lena, 1882; John, 1884; Peter, 1887; Lizzie, 1891. He died June 30, 1931.

Jost Bally (1795-1878)

Jost (Yost) Bally (Balley), born March 25, 1795 in Bavaria, Germany, came to America with his wife and six months old baby in 1829, locating in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In 1832 he moved to Richland County, Ohio. In 1847 he removed to Woodford County, Illinois, living in that state the remainder of his life. Thirteen children were born into this family. He was ordained to the ministry in the early fifties and a few years later to the office of bishop. He had charge of his home congregation at Washington and the Cullom and Gardner churches. He also visited the other scattered congregations of the state occasionally. In later years he was either silenced or withdrew on account of age from active service. He died near Roanoke, Illinois, in 1878.

Peter Beller (1800-1887)

Peter Beller was born in 1800 in Germany where he was elected bishop of his congregation in 1846. In 1850 he came to the Partridge congregation, but later moved to the Gridley settlement where he lived until his death.

ABRAM BURKHART (1857-)

Abram Burkhart was born at Newville, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, July 30, 1857, the son of Abram Burkhart and Elizabeth Burkholder of Newville. He came as a young man to the vicinity of Sterling, Illinois, where he was baptized as a member of the Science Ridge Mennonite Church by Bishop Emanuel Hartman in 1891. He was ordained by lot to the office of deacon for the Science Ridge Congregation by John Nice in 1895. He was married October 15, 1891, to Hettie Byers of Sterling. There are no children.

A. L. BUZZARD (1871-)

A. L. Buzzard was born in 1871 near Goshen, Indiana. At the age of twenty he united with the Mennonite church and became a member of the Yellow Creek congregation. His grandparents came from Pennsylvania, their ancestry coming from Germany. In 1895 he became a clerk in the book store of the Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhart, Indiana. In this capacity he served for four years. In the fall of 1899 he located near Freeport, Illinois, where he married Cora, daughter of J. S. Shoemaker. He was ordained to the ministry by the consent of both the Freeport and Washington congregations in 1906 when he moved to Washington to serve that congregation. He was secretary of the Illinois District Conference for several years. He moved to Elkhart, Indiana, in 1929.

JOHN SAMUEL COFFMAN (1848-1899)

John S. Coffman, the eldest of twelve children, was born October 16, 1848 to Bishop Samuel and Frances Coffman in the famous Shenandoah Valley, Rockingham County, Virginia. His education was received under difficulties. He managed to snatch a little learning from a night school. During the civil war he with other young men escaped to the North to avoid being drafted into the Confederate Army. He prepared himself for teaching school. He was a successful teacher for a number of years. On November 11, 1869, he was united in marriage to Elizabeth Heatwole. On July 18, 1875, the lot falling upon him, he was ordained to the ministry. He had about decided to locate with the Cullom congregation in Illinois when John F. Funk, editor of the *Herald of Truth*, offered him a position as assistant editor of the *Herald,* which he accepted, moving to Elkhart, Indiana, in June, 1879. He was of great value to the publishing house and the congregation at that place. He was instrumental in the publication of *Hymns and Tunes;* in the organization of the Mennonite Book and Tract Society, serving as editor for a number of years; in the establishment of Young People's Meetings and Sunday School Conferences; and in editing the Lesson Helps. But he is remembered for his marvelous work as an evangelist and his efforts as an educator. In these fields he was the pioneer. His services were in continuous demand. This work produced an awakening in the church. Many congregations were revived and saved from extinction. Many young people whom he had won to the church have become valued leaders. He solicited much of the funds and otherwise aided in the establishment of Elkhart Institute which was dedicated in February, 1896, and has since grown into Goshen College. His busy life came to an end in the very midst of his labors. He died at his home in Elkhart on July 22, 1899.

Daniel Deter (1852-)

Daniel Deter was born in Franklin County, Pa., December 1, 1852, the son of Daniel Deter and Elizabeth Weaver, both born in the same county. In the fall of 1880 he was baptized by Bishop Henry Nice at Morrison and in 1884 ordained to the office of deacon by the same bishop through the lot. On December 16, 1879, he was married in Morrison to Elsie Steiner. Their children are: John, 1881; Adam, 1883; Esther, 1886; Andrew, 1888; Eunice, 1890; Ezra, 1892; Daniel, 1895, and Ira, 1899. His occupation has been farming.

Melinda Ebersole (1880-)

Melinda Ebersole was born August 20, 1870 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to David D. and Anna Ebersole who removed with their family to Sterling, Whiteside County, Illinois, in 1889, to engage in farming. Sister Ebersole had started to rural school in Pennsylvania, and when coming to Illinois attended the Stone and later the old Science Ridge School. She remained at home and in the home community for a number of years. She was converted and baptized by Bishop E. M. Hartman, in 1890. From this time she began to take a very definite interest in church work. When the opportunity arose, which was in March, 1894, she entered the Home Mission of Chicago as a stationed worker. A few others had preceded her there during the few months that the mission had already been opened but as none of them remained in the work the credit falls to Sister Ebersole for becoming the first permanent stationed missionary worker of the Mennonite Church. Her first duty there was as field worker, that is to do the visitation work. Of course there were other tasks such as the cottage prayer meetings, medical dispensary, and the Sunday School class. When the mission was closed at 145 West Eighteenth Street, E. J. Berkey, Mary Denlinger, and Sister Ebersole kept up the work. The two women rented a four-roomed flat two blocks away on South Jefferson Street, having rooming quarters elsewhere. They used this place for the continued work. Sunday School was conducted on the Sabbath, sometimes assisted by N. E. Byers then in study at Northwestern University. During the week there were children's classes in which scripture verses and songs were memorized. Sewing classes were conducted for the school girls. During this period of more than a year little direct support was given. These were very trying and dark days. Then the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board finally took up the work and invited the faithful ones to become permanent workers at the Mission which was reopened at 168 West Eighteenth Street. Sister Ebersole remained at the Home Mission for over twenty years. In July, 1914, she returned to Sterling to care for her aged mother. She is still interested in the work, however, and returns to the Mission annually over the Christmas season.

IRA H. EIGSTI (1895-)

Ira H. Eigsti was born near Buda, Bureau County, Sept. 18, 1895, the son of John H. Eigsti and Ida Smucker. He was baptized by Bishop Joseph Burcky in the Willow Springs church. He was married September 1, 1923, to Esther E. Hartzler of Marshallville, Ohio, by Bishop C. A. Hartzler. To this union were born the following children: Mabel, 1925; Delavan, 1927; Elmer, 1928; Dorothy, 1929. He was ordained to the ministry by voice of the Willow Springs church near Tiskilwa by Bishop C. A. Hartzler on September 7, 1919, where he has remained a minister to the present time. After completing the high school at Middlebury, Indiana, where the family had lived for several years, he entered Goshen College, graduating with the B. A. degree in 1923. On June 24, 1918, he was conscripted to military service at Camp Grant but refused to wear the uniform and accept service. As a C. O. he was granted a farm furlough until discharged December 24, 1918. He is a farmer by occupation.

CHRISTIAN ENGEL (-1838)

Chrisian Engel was the first Amish Bishop in America west of Ohio. He was born, and ordained to the office of bishop, in Alsace, then belonging to France. In 1833 he emigrated to Illinois, locating one mile west of the present village of Metamora, where he lived with his son John who had come to this region two years before. The first Amish congregation in Illinois was organized by Engel in 1833 in the home of his son, soon after his arrival. For three years he was the only bishop in the new settlement. He died after a brief illness, having preached on the Sunday before his death. He is buried in the family graveyard on the old Engel homestead.

JOSEPH ENGEL (-1852)

Joseph Engel, son of Christian, was the second bishop in Illinois. He also was ordained to the office in Alsace. He came to Woodford County in 1836 and located four miles west of Metamora. For many years he served the new and growing church. He died while on his way to St. Louis to meet a friend who had emigrated from Europe.

CHRISTIAN ESCH (1818-1882)

Christian Esch was born in 1818 in Alsace and emigrated to the Partridge settlement in 1837. Here he was ordained to the ministry in 1852, and some time later to the office of bishop. He died in 1882.

JOHN V. FORTNER (1854-)

John V. Fortner was born in Lycoming County, Pa., July 23, 1854, a son of Abraham Fortner of Lycoming County and Rebecca Ande of Columbia County. He was baptized in 1881 by Bishop Emanuel Hartman in the Freeport congregation. He was ordained by lot to the office of deacon at Freeport in 1899 by Bishop John Nice. He was married November 28, 1879, near Freeport to Martha Shoemaker. Their children are: Ellis, 1880; Alman, 1881; Fannie, 1884; Olive, 1886; Edna, 1887; Orpha, 1889.

John Fretz Funk (1835-1930)

John F. Funk was born April 6, 1835 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to Jacob and Susanna Fretz Funk. His early life was spent on the farm. He attended public schools in Pennsylvania until he was fourteen, and then took three years of advanced work under a private teacher. He began teaching when he was eighteen years of age. He was one of the first teachers to introduce the blackboard and the drawing maps. He attended Freeland Seminary (now Ursinius College) for three months. After teaching three years, being twenty-two, he came in 1857 to Chicago which then had a population of 100,000. He entered the lumber business with his brother-in-law. Funk attended the Presbyterian Church while in Chicago and for a while considered seriously uniting with it. But he says that after a study of their doctrines, he decided to go back to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and unite with the Mennonite Church. He was baptized in his home church, Line Lexington Congregation, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, by Bishop Jacob Kulp of the Plain Church, in January, 1860. Being an energetic man with initiative and vision, he soon entered Christian work in Chicago. He, with D. L. Moody, did Sunday School work in the city. He also became one of the first members of the Y. M. C. A. of Chicago. Funk was the first Mennonite preacher to preach a sermon in that city and also helped to establish the first Mennonite Church there. He was ordained as an English preacher in the church at Gardner, Illinois, by Bishop John M. Brenneman, May 25, 1865, four weeks later preaching his first sermon at that place. He preached once each month, traveling from his home in Chicago, usually upon a freight train. He also visited other Illinois churches from time to time. He was married on January 19, 1864, to Salome Kratz and to them were born Martha, Phoebe (Mrs. A. B. Kolb), and four other children who died in infancy: Susan Mary, Rebecca

Grace, Anna, and John Edwin. His great contribution to the church was his publication of the *Herald of Truth,* the first (old) Mennonite Church paper. The English edition, which made its appearance in January, 1864, in Chicago, was the first paper among all the Mennonites of America to appear in the English language. On April 6, 1867, Funk moved to Elkhart, Indiana, and later founded the Mennonite Publishing Company in 1875. Here the *Herald* continued to be published, as well as other papers in both the German and English languages. A great abundance of other literature was also published, for Elkhart had become the center of Mennonite leadership and from the publishing house many new movements for church progress began. His chief writings are *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers* and the (part) translation of *Menno Simons' Complete Works,* and *Martyrs' Mirror.* His labors as an editor and minister have been of immeasurable value in the awakening and advancement of the church. For half a century he worked in her behalf and is clearly recognized as one of the first important Mennonite leaders. He was ordained to the office of bishop in the Holdeman Church near Wakarusa, Indiana, on June 6, 1892. He had charge of seven congregations in Indiana, three in Michigan, and the Home Mission in Chicago. He baptized the first members, preached the first sermon, ordained the first ministers, and helped to build the first church for the Mennonites in Chicago. About the year 1901 he was relieved of his office as Bishop. On June 25, 1922, he preached his fifty-seventh anniversary sermon at the Elkhart Church. He preached his sixtieth anniversary sermon at the same church April 5, 1925. In 1908 he sold the periodicals to the Mennonite Publication Board but continued as President of the Mennonite Publishing Co., Elkhart, Ind., being engaged in the sale of religious books. To an advanced age his mind was clear and his body active. He died January 8, 1930.

PETER SAMUEL GARBER (1849-)

Peter Samuel Garber was born near Washington, Tazewell County, Ill., August 8, 1849, the son of Joseph Garber and Anna Schweitzer, who had immigrated from Alsace and Lorraine, France, respectively. He was baptized by Joseph Maurer in the Partridge church in 1862; was chosen minister by ballot and ordained at the Metamora church in 1894 by Joseph Bachman. He was married in 1873 to Magdalena Dellenbach by Christian Esch. To this union were born three children: Anna, 1873; Elnora, 1877, and Laura E., 1887. Garber remained throughout his life a farmer, living until the age of five in Tazewell County, then until his marriage in Woodford County; after the marriage for ten years in Tazewell County, and then back again to Woodford County, where he now resides near Low Point, Ill. Throughout his life he has remained a member of the Partridge, now called Metamora, church.

SAMUEL GERBER (1863-1929)

Samuel Gerber, son of Jacob Gerber and Catherine Ropp, was born near Carlock, Ill., September 8, 1863. He was baptized in 1881 at the Pleasant Grove Mennonite Church near Tremont. On December 30, 1886, he was married to Magdalena Sears of Tiskilwa, by Joseph Burcky. On May 2, 1907, he was ordained to the ministry by Bishop John Smith of Metamora, Ill., and on May 1, 1911, he was ordained bishop by Bishop John Birky of Hopedale. He died at his home near Groveland, Ill., on October 28, 1929. He was buried at the Pleasant Grove Mennonite church near Tremont. Funeral services were in charge of Sanford C. Yoder and J. D. Hartzler.

JOHN GINGRICH (-1845)

John Gingrich, a bishop ordained in Alsace, emigrated to Illinois in 1839, and located on a farm five miles west of Metamora where he lived until his death in 1845.

PETER GINGERICH (-)

Peter Gingerich who was resident in the Washington community, was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Joseph Stuckey in November, 1868. About 1880 he affiliated himself with the Partridge church.

AARON C. GOOD (1881-)

Aaron C. Good was born June 25, 1881 near Dale Enterprise, Virginia, the eighth child of the family of nine born to Preacher Christian and Anna Good. Aaron grew to manhood toiling upon the farm in Virginia. He attended common school and got a little high school education at Goshen Academy in 1904. He was baptized in 1899. In the spring of 1902 he came to Sterling where he worked as a hired hand four years for his brothers Solomon R. and Samuel Good. In December, 1905, he became a worker in the Home Mission in Chicago. In February, 1906, he was recalled to Sterling and ordained on the 25th. He was married the following September to Mamie Landis and started farming the next spring upon the old Stauffer Homestead north of Sterling where he still resides. Two daughters came into the home: Mabel, April 12, 1908, and Lila, November 17, 1911. Aside from the local church work he has held evangelistic meetings, served on the local board of the Home Mission, on the Illinois District Mission Board, and the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. He has been moderator of both the Church and Sunday School conferences.

SOLOMON R. GOOD (1871-)

Solomon R. Good was born at Dale Enterprise, Rockingham County, Va., March 3, 1871, the son of Christian Good and Anna Heatwole, both born at the same place. He was baptized in 1889 at the Weaver's church by Preacher Daniel Heatwole. He moved to Sterling, Illinois, in the early nineties. He was chosen by voice of the church as deacon on November 6, 1923, and ordained by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker for the Science Ridge church. He has been active in general church work and has been chorister of the Sterling church since 1897. He was for many years a member of the Mennonite Board of Education, and for a time the treasurer, and a member of the General Music Committee. He has also served as president of the Illinois Mennonite Mission Board. He was married on January 27, 1898, at Sterling, Ill., to Martha E. Burkholder, by J. S. Coffman. Their children are: Harold, 1899; Lester, 1902; Robert, 1912.

SIMON E. GRAYBILL (1873-)

Simon E. Graybill was born near McAllisterville, Juniata County, Pa., April 21, 1873, a son of Preacher William Graybill of Juniata County and Elizabeth Shelley of Snyder County. He was baptized January 1, 1894, at the Lauver's church, Juniata County, Pa., by Bishop Isaac Eby. He was ordained by lot as minister September 27, 1903, at the Freeport Mennonite church by Bishop John Nice. He was married to Anna Sieber January 4, 1900, and upon her death to Lucy Mishler January 27, 1914. Their children are: Mary, 1900; William, 1903; Paul, 1905; James, 1910; Lois, 1915; Olive, 1918; Verna, 1923. He moved to near Freeport, Ill., in the spring of 1899 where he still resides.

JOHN L. HARNISH (1896-)

John L. Harnish was born near Belton, Cass County, Mo., September 27, 1896, the son of Henry B. Harnish and Susan Lefever of Lancaster County, Pa. He was baptized in 1914 at the Roanoke church by Bishop Andrew Schrock. He spent three years in the high school at Garden City, Mo., and a Bible term at the Hesston Academy. He was ordained to the ministry by the General Mission Board December 24, 1922, for the Peoria Mission, by J. S. Shoemaker and Samuel Gerber. He was married June 24, 1919, at Eureka, Ill., to Viola Ulrich, by Bishop Andrew Schrock. Their children are: Mary, 1920; James, 1922; John, 1924; Charles, 1927; Roland, 1929. He was a worker in the Kansas City Mission 1918-19; the first superintendent of the Peoria Mission, 1919-25, and minister at Manitou, Colo., in the summer of 1925. He resides near Eureka, Ill.

EMANUEL M. HARTMAN (1849-1912)

Emanuel M. Hartman, born June 10, 1849, was the youngest child of a family whose parents had come from Germany. He was ordained to the ministry at the Cullom congregation in 1874 (or a few years earlier). A year later he moved to the Washington community where he was ordained to the office of bishop by Henry Nice and J. M. Christophel about 1877. He was considered an excellent preacher and for many years was very active in the work of the state. Long before the Mennonites took up mission work, he advocated it. He was helping to promote the Mennonite General Conference when suddenly he joined the New Amish near Washington in 1897. He preached for them until his death. He is buried in the Union Cemetery beside the Union Mennonite church house.

CHANCY A. HARTZLER (1876-)

Chancy A. Hartzler was born near Mottville, St. Joseph County, Mich., May 5, 1876, the son of John J. Hartzler, born in Mifflin County, Pa., and Magdalena Mast, born in Holmes County, Ohio. He was baptized by Bishop J. C. Kanagy in the Sycamore Grove church, Cass County, Mo., in the summer of 1893. By consent of the congregation at Sycamore Grove he was ordained minister by Bishop Sebastian Gerig of Wayland, Iowa, October 22, 1896. By vote of the congregation at Willow Springs, Tiskilwa, Ill., he was ordained bishop by Joseph Burcky in the fall of 1914. He served for a time as superintendent of the mission at Kansas City, Kansas, and was secretary of the Western A. M. Conference 1909 and from 1911 to 1920, when the conference was merged with the Illinois Conference. He was married Dec. 23, 1900, to Mary Neuenschwander of Garden City, Mo., by John J. Hartzler. He is a farmer by occupation and has resided near Tiskilwa, Ill., as minister and bishop, since 1913.

JOSEPH D. HARTZLER (1884-)

Joseph D. Hartzler was born near Garden City, Cass County, Mo., October 18, 1884, son of John J. Hartzler and Magdalena Mast, born in Mifflin County, Pa., and Holmes County, Ohio, respectively. He was baptized in 1901 at the Sycamore Grove Church by John J. Hartzler and ordained as minister at the Waldo Mennonite Church near Flanagan, Ill., by voice of the congregation, September 15, 1920, by Bishop S. C. Yoder. By voice of the same congregation he was ordained bishop by S. M. Kanagy, July 25, 1927. He was married December 3, 1909 to Emma Schertz of Livingston County, Ill., by George Summer. He is the father of four children: Alta, 1911; Paul, 1915; Floyd, 1917; Ruth Ann, 1924. He has been engaged in farming.

JOSEPH A. HEISER (1888-)

Joseph A. Heiser was born near Morton, Tazewell County, Ill., August 22, 1888, a son of Joseph Heiser and Barbara Bachman, both born at the same place. He was baptized June 11, 1905, by Peter Zehr at Fisher, Ill. He was ordained as minister on August 5, 1917, by voice of the church at

Fisher, Ill., by Bishop Samuel Gerber and Andrew Schrock. By voice of the church he was ordained by the same Bishop at the same place, on May 1, 1921, as bishop. He was married December 15, 1909, at Fisher, Ill., to Fannie Schrock by Peter Zehr. Their children are: Leslie, 1912; Alta, 1914; Mabel, 1914; Edna, 1918; Willard, 1919. He has been active in Bible conference and evangelistic work in many of the states and Canada.

BENJAMIN HERNER (1845-1915)

Benjamin Herner was born November 2, 1845 in Canada. His parents moved to Cullom, Ill. His first wife having died, he remarried to which union was born one son. He successfully taught the Hack School for twenty-two years. He was much interested in children. For over a decade he was superintendent of the Cullom Sunday School. He was also very active in general church work. At various times he was Church Conference Secretary, Sunday School Conference Secretary, and also Field Worker for the Sunday Schools. He took a prominent part in the formation of the Illinois Sunday School Conference appearing upon its program. He played an important part in the opening of the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission, being on the original local board. He was always well spoken of. He was killed in an accident in 1915 by being run over by a wagon. He is buried in the "Sullivan Center" cemetery a few miles from Cullom, Illinois.

SIMON M. KANAGY (1869-)

Simon M. Kanagy was born April 17, 1869, near Port Royal, Juniata County, Pa., son of David Kanagy and Mary Hartzler, both born at the same place. After attending the common schools at his home he attended Juniata College at Huntingdon, Pa., Elkhart Institute at Elkhart, Ind., Northwestern Academy and Northwestern University, where he received his A. B. degree. He also attended Harvard University summer school, the Toronto Bible College, and Bethany Bible School, Chicago, where he received the B. D. degree. In the summer of 1890 he was baptized at the Belleville Mennonite church, Belleville, Pa., by Bishop Michael Yoder, Mattawana, Pa. He was ordained a minister at the

Toronto Mission, October 22, 1916, by Bishop S. F. Coffman. By voice of the church at the Mennonite Home in Chicago he was ordained bishop, April 5, 1925, by J. S. Shoemaker and C. F. Derstine. In 1916 he was married at Toronto, Ont., to Margaret Elizabeth Brown, by S. F. Coffman. There are no children. After spending some time teaching in the common schools and high schools he became superintendent of the Mennonite Gospel Mission at Toronto, Ont., where he remained for six years. In September, 1920, he was called to the faculty of Hesston College, where he spent three years, until he was summoned to become superintendent of the Mennonite Home Mission at Chicago, Ill., in June, 1923. This position he has occupied to the present.

AMOS E. KREIDER (1889-)

Amos E. Kreider was born near Sterling, Ill., October 19, 1889, as the son of John H. and Magdalena Kreider, both born in Lancaster County, Pa. He attended the public schools of Sterling, Ill. He spent the years 1908-11 at Goshen College Academy, where he graduated in 1911. From 1911-15 he attended Goshen College, receiving the A. B. degree in 1915. He entered at once upon preparation for Christian work at Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill., where he received the B. D. degree in 1917. The following year he was professor of Bible at Goshen College. After a three years' absence in his home community near Sterling, he returned to become Dean of the Bible School at Goshen College during 1921-23. On the closing of Goshen College the following year, he became professor of theology at Witmarsum Theological Seminary for one year, then professor of Religious Education at Bluffton College for one year, and has been since 1925 professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Witmarsum Theological Seminary. He was baptized in 1906 in the Science Ridge Mennonite Church near Sterling, Ill., by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker. He was ordained minister by Bishop Jonathan Kurtz in the year 1915 to serve at the Maple Grove church near Topeka, Ind. He was an assistant pastor of the Science Ridge church near Sterling from 1918 to 1921. He was married in 1917 at Freeport, Ill., to Stella Shoemaker, daughter of Bishop J. S. Shoemaker, and is the father of two children, Robert and Gerald.

AMOS HERSHEY LEAMAN (1878-)

A. Hershey Leaman was born February 18, 1878 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Jacob B. and Anna B. Leaman. He attended the public schools of the community, secured further education at the Gordonville High School, and one year at Millersville, Pennsylvania, State Normal School. He was converted November 3, and received by Bishop Isaac Eby November 20, 1896. Having a definite personal experience and a call to do mission work he made his preparation to go to Chicago only ten days after his baptism. After some difficulty, he finally left home December 28, stopping at Scottdale for a two weeks' Bible conference and arriving at the Home Mission on January 11, 1897. After being at the Mission about a month the mission committee then in charge of the Home Mission sent a representative to approve of the young man from the East. Upon the advice of the workers he was asked to remain. No money was given him for his support. Some people in his home community pledged themselves for eight dollars a month but even this through some misunderstanding was diverted into other channels. The lack of funds made it imperative that he engage in some remunerative task. He took work at a large private home remaining part of the summer. Then he attended the Sunday School conference at Yellow Creek, Indiana, held in August of that year. Being a total stranger John S. Coffman introduced him to a number of the leaders, also meeting the future Mrs. Leaman. Making a favorable impression upon the leaders he was sent back to the mission and in September was made its superintendent. He was ordained on April 7, 1902, by Bishop John Nice. On June 22, he was united in marriage to Amanda Eby a daughter of T. S. Eby, Columbus Grove, Ohio. Mrs. Leaman was born in Wayne County, Ohio, January 10, 1876. She started in school there but her parents, moving to Columbus Grove when she was eleven, left her to complete the rural work at that place. Some high school work was taken at Canton, Ohio, and some normal work at Ada, Ohio. She taught country school until coming to the Home Mission in Chicago in October, 1898, to relieve Mary Denlinger, one of the workers who took a vacation to the East. Mrs. Leaman was again connected with the mission as a regular worker from June, 1899, for a year. The two years until her marriage were spent at home. Mr. and Mrs. Leaman took up their work at the mission soon after their marriage. The station was then located at 145 West Eighteenth Street where their family of five children were born, four of whom are living, namely: Anna Miriam, August 7, 1903; Eunice May, January 12, 1905; Cleland R., June 28, 1907, Gladys Lucille, August 29, 1913. Mr. Leaman received the Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1915. He remained superintendent of the mission until 1920, when he became Director of the Practical Work Department of the Moody Bible Institute. Although the family moved from the mission building, discontinuing their work at the Home Mission, nevertheless Mr. Leaman has since been acting as assistant pastor and Mrs. Leaman has had charge of the Primary Department of the Sunday School.

JONAS LITWILLER (1865-)

Jonas Litwiller was born near Pekin, Tazewell County, Ill., June 13, 1865, the son of Joseph Litwiller, born at Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mary Roupp, born near Pekin. He was baptized at the Pleasant Grove church near Morton, in 1882, by Christian Noffsinger. He was ordained by lot November 10, 1904, as minister in the Pleasant Grove congregation by Bishop Sebastian Gerig.

SIMON LITWILLER (1880-)

Simon Litwiller was born near Hopedale, Tazewell County, Ill., June 29, 1880, the son of John Litwiller, born in Butler County, Ohio, and Fannie Birky, born near Tremont, Ill. He was baptized in October, 1898, at the Hopedale Mennonite church by J. C. Birky. He was ordained by voice of the church at Hopedale on May 15, 1910, by Bishop Andrew Schrock. He was ordained as bishop at the Hopedale church by Bishop Samuel Gerber by voice of the church January 11, 1925. He was married February 7, 1905, to Katie Erisman by J. C. Birky at Hudson, Ill. Their children are: Esther, 1907; Lester, 1909; Chancy, 1911; Willie, 1916; Allan, 1917; Freda, 1919, and Rachel, 1924.

JOSEPH MAURER (-1867)

Joseph Maurer, a bishop from Alsace, emigrated to New Orleans in 1855. The next year he came to the Partridge congregation and served as one of four bishops in that community, the other three also being immigrants from Europe. He died while on his way to New Orleans and was buried along the banks of the Mississippi in an unknown grave.

BENJAMIN MELLINGER (1880-)

Benjamin Mellinger was born near Sterling, Jordan Township, Whiteside County, Ill., April 9, 1880, a son of Henry K. Mellinger and Emeline Hess, both born in Lancaster County, Pa. He was baptized September 19, 1899, at the Science Ridge church near Sterling, by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker. He was chosen by the church as deacon November 6, 1923, and ordained by Bishop John Nice. He was married December 12, 1901, to Anna L. Andreas, near Prairieville, Ill., by Philip Nice. Their children are: Stella, 1903; Howard, 1905; Charles, 1908; Harold, 1910; Bertha, 1915.

EARL MILLER (1900-)

Earl Miller was born near Trail, Holmes County, Ohio, March 18, 1900, the son of Manasses Miller, born in Holmes County, and Amanda Farmwald, born in Indiana. He attended the Numschillen Township high school for three years and the Eastern Mennonite School for two years. He was baptized in 1912 at Louisville, Ohio, by Bishop J. S. Gerig. He was ordained as minister October 4, 1925, at Aurora, Ohio, by Bishops S. E. Allgyer and E. B. Stoltzfus for work at the Peoria Mission. He was married September 5, 1922, to Fern Oesch by Bishop E. B. Stoltzfus at Kent, Ohio. Their children are: Robert, 1924; Ellen, 1925, and John, 1929. He removed to Aurora, Ohio, in 1930.

JOHN NAFFZIGER (1802-1856)

John Naffziger was born in 1802 in Lorraine, where as a young man he was ordained as bishop in his congregation. In 1837 he came to the Partridge settlement in Woodford County. Here he labored as a pioneer farmer of the country and with Engel served the various Amish settlements which soon grew up. As bishop he traveled frequently on horseback and by wagon over the prairies and through the woods, visiting the settlements in Bureau County, those near Wesley City, and others.

Daniel Nafziger (1860-)

Daniel Nafziger was born near Hopedale, Tazewell County, Ill., March 16, 1860, the son of John Nafziger and May Burky, both born in Germany. He was baptized August 16, ——, by Jacob Zehr. He was ordained as minister by voice of the church at Hopedale March 1, 1892, by Joseph Slagel of Milford, Nebr.

Henry Nice (1822-1892)

Henry Nice was born April 17, 1822 in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. He was united in marriage to Levina Tyson in 1842, who remained his faithful companion through life surviving him a number of years. To this union were born: Benjamin, February 15, 1844; Philip, November 12, 1845; Hannah, August 11, 1848; Henry, December 12, 1850; Levina, September 30, 1853; Jonas, November 25, 1855; John, November 13, 1858; Ella, July 9, 1864. In 1850, yet in his early manhood, he moved to Medina County, Ohio, where he remained for fifteen years during which time (1853) he was ordained to the ministry and later held a temporary membership in one of the Oberholtzer churches. Feeling that the branch was too liberal in some of its practices he removed to Sterling, Whiteside County, Illinois, and became identified with the Science Ridge Church at which place he was accepted as minister and was ordained to the office of bishop by Henry Yother in 1868. That same year he changed his location to Morrison where he helped to organize a church a few years previous. The next year he purchased a farm. Although engaged in farming he found time to assist in general church work. He was commanding in appearance, strict in discipline, impressive in speech, using the German language entirely, and influential in the development of the other congregations of the state. He was frequently called to settle difficulties arising in churches elsewhere. He was one of the outstanding leaders in forming the Illinois Conference in 1872.

John Nice (1858-1931)

John Nice, the seventh child of Bishop Henry and Levina Nice, was born November 13, 1858 in Medina County, Ohio. He was baptized by Bishop Henry Nice at Morrison in 1876, and was united in marriage to Lizzie Dutcher February 5, 1884. Their family is composed of four children: Abner A., May 1, 1885; Cora A., March 21, 1888; Jonas P., December 18, 1891; Paul A., November 18, 1893. He was ordained to the ministry through the lot by Emanuel M. Hartman May 31, 1887 and to the office of bishop by Hartman and P. Y. Lehman in June, 1895. Throughout his life he was engaged in farming. As bishop he served the congregations in northern Illinois and the Chicago Mission for over thirty years. In this time he assisted in the ordination of Abram Burkhart, deacon; L. J. Lehman, minister; O. S. Hostetler, minister; Josiah Miller, minister; Samuel Honderich, minister; Menno Yoder, deacon; A. C. Good, minister; J. S. Shoemaker, bishop; and S. E. Graybill, minister. He served as moderator of the Illinois Conference a number of times. He died July 10, 1931.

EDWARD H. OYER (1881-)

Edward H. Oyer was born near Meadows, McLean County, Ill., March 2, 1881, the son of John P. Oyer, born near Peoria, Ill., and Mary Smith, born near Morton, Ill. He was baptized in the Metamora church by Bishop John Smith at an early age and ordained by lot to the office of deacon in 1920 at the same church by Bishop D. J. Johns. He was married by Bishop Andrew Schrock in 1906 to Ellen M. Smith of Eureka, Ill. Their children are: Ethel, 1908, Thelma, 1910; Pauline, 1914; Harold, 1920. He has been secretary of the church conference for several years and active in Sunday School work.

DAVID E. PLANK (1884-)

David E. Plank was born near Danvers, McLean County, Ill., July 28, 1884, the son of Isaac Plank, born at Belleville, Pa., and Mary Kaufman, born in Baden, Germany. He was baptized in 1895 by John S. Coffman at MacClenny, Florida. In 1921 he moved to Eureka, Ill., where he has since resided. He was ordained by lot to the office of deacon August 10, 1924, at the Roanoke church by Bishop C. F. Derstine. On March 21, 1912, he was married at Belleville, Pa., to Fannie Zook by Bishop Eli Kanagy. Their children are: Marvin, 1913; Martha, 1915; Edward, 1924; Donald, 1924.

EDWARD A. REDIGER (1866-)

Edward A. Rediger was born near Gridley, Livingston County, Ill., April 14, 1866, a son of Christian Rediger, born in Germany, and Katie Risser, born near Roanoke, Ill. He was baptized in 1894 near Aurora, Nebraska, by D. Augsburger, and ordained as deacon by ballot November 1, 1925, in the Waldo congregation near Gridley, Ill., by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker. He has no children. He was a farmer until his retirement in 1917.

ANDREW ROPP (-)

Andrew Ropp, brother to Christian, came to America in 1826, with his father. In 1833, he located in the Dillon Creek settlement in Tazewell County. He was ordained to the ministry sometime before 1840, and a few years afterwards was elected to the office of bishop. He served his own congregation for many years, being frequently called by the duties of his office to the Bureau County settlement, as well as to other localities.

CHRISTIAN S. SCHERTZ (1851-)

Christian S. Schertz was born near Washington, Woodford County, Illinois, November 16, 1851, the son of Christian Schertz of Lorraine, France, and Catherine Engel, of Alsace, France. He was married December, 1874 to Phebe Gingery at Metamora, Illinois, by Bishop Christian Esch. To this union were born three children: Samuel (1875), Louis (1878), and Benjamin (1881). He was ordained minister by vote at the Roanoke Church near Eureka, Illinois, in 1890 by Bishop Joseph Bachman. Christian Schertz has spent most of his life as a farmer in the vicinity of Washington and Eureka, Illinois, but has been spending his declining years with his son, Benjamin J., who is living in Goshen, Indiana.

HENRY R. SCHERTZ (1886-)

Henry R. Schertz was born near Washington, Tazewell County, Ill., February 24, 1886, the son of Peter Schertz and Magdalene Esch, both born near the same place. His preparation was secured in the Washington high school and in the Bethany Bible School in Chicago, Ill., where he spent two years. He was baptized in 1900 by Bishop Sebastian Gerig, at Metamora, Ill. He was ordained by Bishop Andrew Schrock to the ministry at Metamora, Ill., by vote of the congregation in 1917. He was married to Martha M. Imhoff, June 10, 1909, by Andrew Schrock. Their children are: Floyd, 1910; Russell, 1911; Robert, 1918, and Donald, 1925. He spent almost three years (September, 1920 to June, 1923) in city mission work as superintendent of the Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago and has been active in general church work. He was for a time president of the Mennonite Board of Education and is at the present time on the executive committee. He was a member of the executive committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities for a number of years.

Peter D. Schertz (1848-1928)

Peter D. Schertz was born June 26, 1848, the son of David Schertz and Catherine Bachman. He was baptized in his youth in the Partridge church by Bishop Joseph Maurer, ordained as minister by ballot in 1895 in the Roanoke church by Bishop Chris Ropp. He was married on March 17, 1874, at Metamora, Ill., to Anna Schertz, by Bishop Chris Ropp. They became the parents of the following children: Willie, 1875; Ben, 1876; David, 1878; Kathryn, 1881; Anna, 1883; Peter R., 1886; Arthur, 1889; Raymond, 1893. He died February 25, 1928, and was buried in the Roanoke Mennonite cemetery. He resided throughout his life on a farm near Metamora, Woodford County, Ill.

Andrew A. Schrock (1863-)

Andrew A. Schrock was born in France, October 28, 1863, the son of Andrew Schrock and Kathryn Kramer. He was baptized in 1878 at the Roanoke church by Bishop Christian Ropp. He was ordained as minister by vote of the church July 8, 1894 at Metamora by Bishop Joseph Bachman. At the same church he was chosen by a majority of votes as bishop and ordained April 24, 1898 by Bishop John Smith. On January 12, 1888 he was married to Barbara Bachman by Bishop Joseph Bachman. Their children are: Emanuel, 1888; Joel, 1890; William, 1892; Lizzie, 1895; Dan, 1897; David, 1900; Andrew, 1903, and Katie, 1905. His occupation has always been farming.

J. S. Shoemaker (1854-)

Joseph S. Shoemaker was born February 1, 1854 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father, Benjamin Shoemaker, with his family moved to Freeport, Illinois, and located on a farm a few miles from that city. Joseph spent his entire life from that time in the Freeport community directly and indirectly upon the farm. He was united in marriage to Elizabeth S. Brubaker, daughter of Rudolph Brubaker, an early settler of that congregation, on December 6, 1877. Their nine children are: Cora B., September 18, 1878, now Mrs. A. L. Buzzard; Edwin B., November 21, 1879; Fannie E. (deceased), October 14, 1881, married to Levi Mumaw; Elta M., November 27, 1883, now Mrs. W. F. Unsicker; Bertha B., May 22, 1885, now Mrs. C. E. Seiber (widowed); Arthur C., February 15, 1887; Charles B., February 2, 1890; Stella R., November 17, 1893, now Mrs. A. E. Kreider; and Louella P., May 20, 1897, now Mrs. W. R. Sanders. All of these children became members of the church and active workers, some in church institutions. J. S. Shoemaker was baptized into church fellowship in the spring of 1878. He was first active in local Sunday School work and was ordained to the ministry in his own congregation by a unanimous vote in 1892. From this time he has been very busy. His first activity was as an evangelist. He held meetings in over a hundred different churches and many of them were revisited. He was ordained to the office of bishop, again by unanimous vote, in 1902. He had joint charge of the Northern Illinois congregations with Bishop John Nice. He has been president of the Mennonite Publication Board since its organization in 1908. He was a member of the Mennonite Board of Education from 1903 until he resigned in 1920. During that time he had served variously on the Religious Welfare and Faculty committees. He had been a member and in 1905-6 was president of the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board. In 1906, he became secretary of the newly formed Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. This position he held for fifteen years until he asked to be relieved. However, he retained his membership upon the board. He was moderator of the General Conference in 1905 and 1909. This conference made him chairman of the Christian Workers' Manual committee. He wrote a number of the chapters in Volume I, "The Ministry," a part of that manual. In the Illinois conference he has been its moderator many times and even served as moderator of other district conferences. He was one of the influences which united the Amish-Mennonites with the Illinois Conference. He was also engaged in Bible Normal or Conference work, from time to time co-laboring with other leaders of the church. He edited the Sunday School "Lesson Helps" for a number of years. All these labors necessitated much travel and kept him away from home much of the time, but his travel was greatly extended when the Board of Missions and Charities sent him to visit the India Mission. In June, 1910, accompanied by J. S. Hartzler, he started the trip around the world. The World's Missionary Conference held in Scotland was attended, the Holy Land was visited and the work in India was investigated. Returning again the following May the travelers published the book "Missions in the Orient and Observations by the Way." Shoemaker's other literary works include many articles to the church paper. He did much of the work in connection with the "Church and Sunday School Hymnal" which appeared in 1902, even writing a few of the songs with words and melodies. In 1925 his book, *The Ideal Christian Home,* was published. He now lives in the town of Dakota, Illinois, only partially retired from his many responsibilities.

DANIEL W. SLAGEL (1864-)

Daniel W. Slagel was born near Chenoa, Livingston County, Ill., March 26, 1864, the son of Christian Slagel and Saloma Summer both born in Alsace, France. He was baptized in 1891 in the Waldo Mennonite church by Christian Ropp. On June 3, 1900, he was ordained by lot to the ministry at the Waldo church by Bishop John Smith. He was married February 2, 1888, at Eureka, Ill., by Christian Ropp, to Mary C. Roeschley. Their children are: Laura, 1889; Arthur, 1891; Alma, 1893; Amos, 1895; Emma, 1897; George, 1898; Willie, 1900; Edna, 1902; Edwin, 1904, Irene, 1906; Gilbert, 1908, and Wilton, 1912.

BENJAMIN SPRINGER (1881-)

Benjamin Springer was born near Minier, Tazewell County, Ill., August 23, 1881, son of Joseph Springer, born in Bavaria, Germany, and Barbara Nafziger, born at the same place. He was baptized February, 1915, by John Kinsinger of the Central Conference Mennonites. By vote of the church he was ordained in 1921 by Bishop Samuel Gerber for the Hopedale Mennonite church. He had transferred his membership from the Central Conference Mennonite church in the fall of 1906. He was married February 27, 1905, at Bloomington, Ill., to Clara Heiser, by Peter Schantz. Their children are: Howard, 1906; Elsie, 1907; Ina, 1911; Glenn, 1913; Nelson, 1915; Loren, 1921; Loretta, 1924.

MENNO SIMON STEINER (1866-1911)

Menno Simon Steiner was born (April 30, 1866) near Cranberry, Allen County, Ohio, the second child born to Preacher Christian P. and Barbara Steiner. He attended the Richland Township Schools and graduated from the Bluffton High School in 1887. Later he attended Ohio Northern University at Ada, Ohio. For several years he taught school. In 1891 he spent one year in study at Oberlin Theological Seminary. He was converted in 1885, at New Stark Chapel Church where J. S. Coffman was holding a series of meetings. Soon after he was baptized into membership at the Zion Church near Bluffton. During the years of his schooling he had been connected with the Publishing Company at Elkhart, Indiana, both in traveling and editorial work. He was ordained at the Elkhart Church by Bishop John F. Funk on March 9, 1893. He was very aggressive in the work of the church. His most prominent part was played as a pioneer in the field of missions. In the fall of 1893 he went to Chicago and opened a Mission. This work was begun without special funds, without a board, and without a building or any property. The only resource was the decision of the General Sunday School Conference held that summer. Having been made editor of the Young People's Paper he used that salary to start the work. A hall was rented and the Home Mission opened on December 3, 1893. During the next year he was instrumental in forming the Mennonite Benevolent Organization which had charge of the Mission. On April 8, 1894, he was united in marriage to Clara Eby of Columbus Grove, Ohio. She was the second child born May 9, 1873 to T. S. and Susanna Eby. She too was very much interested in general church work and for a time was General Secretary of the Women's Missionary Society of the church. To this union were born five children, namely: Charity Evangeline (Hostetler), March 25, 1895; Esther Agnes (Meyer), July 25, 1898; Luke Eby, December 11, 1900; Paul Eby, October 9, 1902; Clara Grace, February 3, 1905. Mr. and Mrs. Steiner remained at the Home Mission until the fall of 1894, when Steiner took charge of a little church in Canton, Ohio. A year later they moved to the Zion church community near Bluffton, where Steiner had been asked to come as the minister, which position he filled until his death. He spent much of his time in evangelistic work. Nor did he forget the mission interests of the church. He was instrumental in organizing the Board of Charitable Homes and Missions and was its president until it was merged with the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board in 1906. He was then elected president of the consolidated board which office he filled until his death. Aside from many articles contributed to the church papers, and the book *Pitfalls and Safeguards,* he wrote a very interesting little book, *John S. Coffman, Mennonite Evangelist.* He died, literally worn out by his labors, and lies buried in the little graveyard of the Zion church near Bluffton, Ohio.

EZRA H. YORDY (1892-)

Ezra H. Yordy was born near Flanagan, Livingston County, Ill., April 6, 1892, the son of Joseph Yordy, born near Pekin, and Elizabeth Roeschley, born near Eureka. He was baptized in 1908 at the East Bend congregation near Fisher, Ill., by Peter Zehr. He was ordained to the ministry July 15, 1917 by vote of the Roanoke church by Bishop Andrew Schrock. He was ordained as bishop by the voice of the same congregation August 30, 1925, by Bishops C. F. Derstine and S. F. Coffman. He was married December 16, 1915, at Rantoul, Ill., to Carrie E. Good by Bishop Peter Zehr. Their children are: Ethel, 1917; Dorothy, 1918; Alta, 1921; Florence, 1923; Ruth, 1927.

DANIEL ZEHR (1849-)

Daniel Zehr was born near East Peoria, Tazewell County, Ill., on March 9, 1849, the son of Peter Zehr and Elizabeth Oyer, the father coming from Bavaria, Germany, and the mother from Alsace-Lorraine. He was baptized by Bishop Christian Ropp. He was ordained to the ministry in 1895 by lot by

Bishop John Smith. He was united in marriage with Kathryn Heiser on January 13, 1874, by Bishop Andrew Ropp. His children are: Jacob, 1875; Lizzie, 1877; Peter, 1879; Amos, 1881; Tillie, 1886; Ida, 1888; Dan, 1890. He now resides at Mackinaw, Ill., having been a farmer all his life.

JACOB ZEHR (1875-1929)

Jacob Zehr was born near Deer Creek, Tazewell County, Ill., November 29, 1875, the son of Daniel Zehr, born near East Peoria, and Kathryn Heiser, born in Tazewell County. He was baptized in 1892 by Bishop John Smith in the Goodfield Mennonite congregation. He was ordained in June, 1912, by vote of the church by John C. Birky, at the Goodfield Mennonite church. He was married January 25, 1900, at Deer Creek by Bishop Birky to Elizabeth Wilbor. Their children are: Esther, 1902; Martha, 1904; Edna, 1907; Florence, 1909; Arthur, 1911; Robert, 1914; Howard, 1916; Mildred, 1919. He died May 21, 1929 and is buried at the Mt. Zion cemetery near Deer Creek. The funeral services were conducted by J. D. Hartzler and Samuel Gerber.

SAMUEL ZEHR (1870-)

Samuel S. Zehr was born near Lilly, Tazewell County, Ill., February 24, 1870, son of Peter Zehr, born in Germany, and Elizabeth Oyer, born in France. He was baptized in 1886 in Tazewell County by Jacob Zehr. He was chosen by vote of the church and ordained as deacon in June, 1906, at Fisher, Ill., by Peter Zehr. At the same place he was married on September 27, 1892, to Lena Unsicker by Chris Nafsiger. Their children are: Aaron, 1896; Samuel, 1900; Elizabeth, 1906. He has followed the calling of farmer throughout his life and resides near Foosland, Ill.

THE DEFENSELESS MENNONITE CONFERENCE*

DAVID N. CLAUDON (1867-)

David N. Claudon, the second child of a family of four other sons and four daughters was born March 30, 1867 to Joseph Claudon of Alsace-Lorraine, and Mary Mosimann Claudon of Peoria, Illinois, at Waldo, Livingston County, Illinois. He was baptized June, 1887, at Waldo, Illinois, by Elder Joseph Rediger, and married at Berne, Indiana, March 1, 1891, to Kathryn Egly, daughter of Elder Henry Egly, by Joseph Rediger. To this union were born seven children: Joseph, Esther, Ruth, Naomi, Jesse, Adah, Lois. Claudon has been engaged in various occupations during his life; that is, teaching school, farming, grain business, and is in general business at the present time. He was chosen deacon by ballot, 1915, at Waldo, Illinois, and was ordained by C. R. Egle, January 4, 1920. He has held various positions in the local church, as superintendent of the Sunday School, and has been especially active in conference undertakings in which he served in the following capacities: conference secretary, mission treasurer, editor of the church paper, superintendent of the Orphanage and president of the Old People's Home. He recently moved to Valpariso, Indiana.

CHRISTIAN R. EGLE (1858-1926)

Christian R. Egle, the third child of a family of three brothers and two sisters was born February 24, 1858 to Christian and Maria Rediger Egle at Rieth, Oberamt Vaihingen, Wuerttemberg, Germany. He came with his parents to this country in the spring of 1874. They left mainly because of universal compulsory military service. His father, whose parents were Henry and Jacobina Egle (nee Ehresman), was born at Lerchenhof, Obermausheim, Germany, where his parents and grandparents had lived since they came from Switzerland at the time of the persecution. His mother was born at the Scheibenharder Hof near Karlsruhe, Baden, Germany, her parents being Jacob and Jacobina Gingrich Rediger. The grandparents on both sides of the house were Mennonites. Egle's preliminary education was received in Germany, and at one time or another he served as a millhand, carpenter, farmer, and printer.

---

* The list of biographies for this conference includes several non-Illinois ministers, and is not complete for those in Illinois.

At the age of fifteen years he was baptized in 1873 by Joseph Stalter and united with the Amish Mennonite Church at Zweibruecken, Rheinpfalz, Germany, but without a definite personal experience of repentance and forgiveness of sins. Having an Uncle Jacob Rediger living near Eureka, Illinois, the family came to Eureka in April, 1874, when he was sixteen years of age, and lived there from the spring of 1874 until March, 1876, when they moved to Livingston County, Illinois. In the fall of 1878, his heart was moved through the death of his sister and revival meetings being conducted by Bishop Henry Egly of Linn Grove, Indiana, and John Detsh of Archbold, Ohio. In June, 1879, he was rebaptized by Joseph Rediger at Gridley, Illinois. Thus he was transferred from the Amish to the Defenseless branch. Four years later he was chosen minister by ballot at Gridley on June 25, 1883, and was ordained by Joseph Rediger and Peter Hochstettler. On December 23, 1891, he was married to Bena Angermeier of Milford, Nebraska, the service being performed by Peter Hochstettler. To this union were born six children, Sarah, George, Katherine, Alma, Bertha, and Ella. In June, 1893, he was chosen bishop or elder by ballot and was ordained by Joseph Rediger and Peter Hochstettler, in this capacity serving the Salem church of Waldo Township, Livingston County, Illinois. He served in various capacities, some of which are the following: evangelist, home and foreign mission treasurer, conference president, conference secretary, member of educational and publishing committees, editor of *Heils Bote* and member of the Board of the Fort Wayne Training School. He was very active throughout his career, and was long considered the outstanding leader of his church in Illinois. He died in 1926.

JOSEPH K. GERIG (1868-)

Joseph K. Gerig, the fifth child of a family of six brothers and four sisters, was born Oct. 28, 1868 to Joseph Gerig of Alsace-Lorraine, France, and Catharina Nafzinger Gerig in Allen County, Indiana, near Fort Wayne. He was reared on a farm. He was baptized in 1874 by Reverend Henry Egly, and was married to Leah B. Gerig by Reverend Henry Egly in 1889. To this union was born Clara May Gerig on May

21, 1900. He was chosen minister in 1899 and ordained by Reverend C. R. Egle, and later chosen bishop by ballot of the conference and vote of the congregation at Chicago, being ordained October 2, 1917 by Reverend C. R. Egle. He has been very active in city mission work, and before being ordained served as a Sunday School teacher, and on committees to arrange topics for young people's meetings of the conference. He has also served as a traveling evangelist and as conference chairman.

PETER HOCHSTETTLER (1834-1924)

Peter Hochstettler was born Feb. 28, 1834 near Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany. He came to America in 1849 with his parents, brothers and sisters; landed at New York, August 10 of that year, and became a resident of Tazewell County, Illinois, on August 26, 1849. He married Barbara Birkey of Groveland, Illinois, on March 14, 1858. To this union were born nine children: Lizzie, Joseph, Lydia, Edward (deceased), Katharine, Amos, Susanna, Mary and John (deceased). He was ordained to the ministry by Henry Egly, and as bishop by Joseph Rediger and Henry Egly, serving in this capacity as bishop or elder of the Groveland church. He was particularly active in evangelistic work. The funeral service was preached by Jacob Schmucker, Plevna, Kansas, and C. R. Egle, Meadows, Illinois. He was buried at Groveland, Illinois.

ELI LANTZ (1859-)

Rev. Eli Lantz, the third child of a family of five brothers and four sisters, was born (Nov. 27, 1859) at Pettisville, Fulton County, Ohio, to Levi Lantz, and Fannie Rupp Lantz of Alsace-Lorraine, France. He was baptized in 1881 at Archbold, O., by Rev. Henry Egly, and married Jan. 19, 1882, at Archbold, Ohio, to Mary Rupp by Rev. Henry Egly, and to this union were born nine children: Ezra, Louise, Albert, Rosa, Erwin, Arvada, Dennis, Mildred and Arminda. He was chosen minister in 1894 at Elkton, Michigan, by vote and ordained by Rev. C. R. Egle. In November, 1918, he was elected bishop by ballot of church and conference and was ordained by Rev. E. H. Slagle serving the church near Linn Grove, Ind., in this capacity. He has served as an evangelist and conference chairman at different times, and also as member of the Mission Board, Program Committee, etc.

JOSEPH REDIGER (1826-1904)

Joseph Rediger was born in 1826, in Leabach, Baden, Germany. In 1834 his father had come to America, but could not afford to bring his family with him; so Joseph went to his grandfather in Obermausheim, Wuerttemberg. At the age of sixteen he was baptized into membership in the Mennonite Church by J. Wolber. In 1843 he went back to Baden and worked for an uncle for a short time until he took a position on a big farm. He was soon made head man over ten men with top-notch wages, which amounted to $25.00 per annum. Such were the conditions then in that country.

From the time his father went to America, Joseph was ambitious to follow him. Strange as it may seem he saved enough of his meager salary to enable him to start for America and arrived at Buffalo, New York, in 1848. Here his money gave out. He worked in the harvest fields, until he had saved enough to continue his journey to Peoria, Illinois, where his father lived. Arriving in southern Ohio, he was again out of money. Working again for some time he was able to purchase a ticket to Peoria, where he arrived with twenty-five cents.

Of course there were no railroads on which he could travel except one from Albany to Buffalo. This road had wooden rails with strap iron spiked on top. A peculiar accident happened while he was traveling on this road. It was supposed that the end of an iron was raised from the wooden rail and a car wheel ran under it. The iron came up through the floor of the car in which he was riding, pierced through the roof, came back down through the roof into the car and again through the floor, killing one person instantly, derailing the train resulting in a general smash-up in which many persons were injured. At all other times he traveled by water on lakes, rivers and canals.

Rediger found his father living all alone near Peoria in a little log hut, which being home was considered a palace. America being an excellent country in which poor but industrious people could expect to make a decent living, he was anxious to bring the remainder of the family. His father, having worked for several years, was able to arrange for the necessary funds. Having spent about six weeks with his father, Rediger started back for Germany. He encountered Asiatic cholera on boats, and starvation rations on the ocean vessels, but arrived safely. In a short time he had interested a large number of people to emigrate. All arrangements were made to start, but the money his father had guaranteed to send had not come. The people began to mistrust that he had ever been to America. The money order finally came. He at once started for America, with his mother, two brothers, and three sisters, and a number of other people. Arriving at Peoria, he at once began cutting and delivering wood to a wagon factory.

In 1850 he was united in marriage to Fanny Oyer, by Michael Moseman, and lived in the vicinity of Washington, Illinois. In 1859 he came to Gridley, Illinois, and purchased a farm seven and one-half miles northeast, in Livingston County. His first wife died May, 1872. There were born to them thirteen children, five sons and eight daughters. One daughter and three sons died in infancy. The living children are: Magdalena Slagel, residing near Flanagan; Barbara Oyer, Meadows; Elizabeth Oyer and Maria Littwiler, north of Meadows; Fanny Claudon, Anna and Katharina Rediger, Meadows; Jacob Rediger, north of Meadows; Benjamin Rediger, Meadows. In 1904 there were thirty-one living grandchildren and eleven living great-grandchildren. In January, 1876, he was married to widow Anna Oyer by Henry Egly and lived with her until her death in July, 1897.

In 1863 he was chosen minister of the Gridley Prairie congregation. He became involved in a church difficulty with the other ministers of the congregation. Related to Henry Egly of Adams County, Indiana, Rediger, at the time of the "Egly" controversy, cast his lot with Egly and organized a new church from his relatives and friends who stood by him in this controversy. He thus became the founder of one of the charter congregations of Defenseless Mennonites. In 1868 he was made bishop of the Salem congregation.

In 1903 he built a house in Meadows and moved into it. On March 8, 1904, he passed away. The funeral was very largely attended. Short sermons were preached in German by Rev. Peter Hostettler, Groveland, Illinois; Rev. C. R. Egle, of the local church; and Rev. Gerig, Indiana. Rev. Benjamin Rupp, then of the Salem Orphanage, preached in English.

Elmer E. Rupp (1885-)

Elmer E. Rupp, the ninth child of a family of seven brothers and five sisters, was born May 13, 1885 to Daniel Rupp of Archbold, Ohio, and Magdalena Gerber Rupp of Pekin, Ill. He was baptized by J. K. Gerig, February, 1903, near Archbold. His education consisted of attendance at the Archbold high school three years, Valparaiso College one term, Angola College two terms, Moody Institute two years. He was married November 25, 1915, at Pioneer, Ohio, to Esther Josephine Slagle, by E. M. Slagle, and to this union were born Pauline May, Ruthanna, James Edwin, and Phyllis Marie. He was chosen a deacon by ballot during 1924 and was ordained by E. M. Slagle. He has served as a Sunday School superintendent, teacher, chorister, and president of C. W. Band at various times. He serves the congregation near Archbold, Ohio.

Samuel Rupp (1856-)

Samuel Rupp, the eighth child of a family of eight brothers and four sisters, was born August 20, 1856 at Archbold, Fulton County, Ohio, to John Rupp and Magdelina Lauber Rupp of Alsace, France. He secured a grammar school education, and then took up farming for an occupation. He has served as a chorister, secretary, teacher, and superintendent, and was ordained minister by Bishop E. M. Slagle in 1926. He was married on ———— by a Judge of Probate Court and to this union were born Mary, Verena, Aldina, Elizabeth, Ada, Zilla, Ephraim, Rose, and Blanche Rupp. He serves the congregation near Archbold, Ohio.

Jacob Schmucker (1860-)

Jacob Schmucker, the second child of a family of five brothers and twelve sisters, was born Sept. 10, 1860 at Geneva, Adams County, Indiana, to Daniel Schmucker of France, and Susanna Egle of Baden, Germany. He received a common school education to the age of 16 years. He was baptized in March, 1880, in Adams County, Indiana, by Henry Egly. He was chosen minister by members' vote January 1, 1884, in Reno County, Kansas, and ordained by Peter Hochstetler. He was married the following year on December 13 by the same bishop to Katie Schott. By vote of this same congregation he was chosen bishop in 1892 and was consecrated by Joseph Rediger. Five children have been born to these parents: Simon P., Bertha E., Jesse P., and Reuben P. He has been very faithful to his duties and serves an active congregation of Mennonites at Plevna, Kansas.

EMANUEL SLAGLE (1870-)

Emanuel Slagle, the seventh child of a family of three brothers and five sisters, was born July 24, 1870 at Gridley, Livingston County, Illinois, to Benjamin Slagle, of New York City and Anna Klopfenstein of Germany. He secured his education in the common schools of Illinois and was baptized by Joseph Rediger, July, 1887. He married Lena Summer of Gridley, Ill., in 1890, the service being performed by Elder Joseph Rediger, and to this union were born nine children of whom six are still living. He was chosen minister by the Salem church of Flanagan Ill., and was ordained by Elder C. R. Egle in 1910. In 1916 the Pioneer, Ohio church of Fulton Co., Ohio, chose him for bishop, and he was ordained by Elder C. R. Egle. In this capacity he has served the Pioneer and Archbold, Ohio, congregations. At various times he has served as a Sunday School superintendent, member of the Mission Board, and chairman of the Defenseless Mennonite Conference. He has been very active in various church work, and has conducted several series of evangelistic meetings.

DAVID M. ZIMMERMAN (1869-)

David M. Zimmerman, the second child of a family of seven brothers and one sister, was born December 23, 1869 at Chenoa, Livingston County, Ill., to Isaak Zimmerman, of Baden, Germany, and Mary Stuckey of France. He was baptized by Peter Hochstetler in Sterling, Kansas, October, 1886. and married Mary Albrecht of Sterling, Kansas on December 13, 1890, the service being performed by Peter Hochstetler. To this union were born John E., Everett W., Mable S., and Pearl B. He was chosen deacon by a vote in Sterling, Kansas, during 1905, and minister by ballot in November, 1923, being ordained by Elder C. R. Egle. He has served as a teacher and superintendent in Sunday School, as an evangelist, conference trustee, and member of the Mission Board. He has been very active in evangelistic work and has written several articles for the church paper.

THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES*

Amos M. Eash (1882-)

Amos M. Eash was born in 1882 near Middlebury, Indiana, where he grew to manhood. The Eash family came from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to Indiana. His mother was Anna Adeline Schrock Eash, daughter of Cornelius and Magdalena Bontrager Schrock. They came to Indiana from Holmes County, Ohio. He was baptized October, 1898, by Bishop P. Y. Lehman and united with the Shore Mennonite Church. He came to Chicago in the fall of 1903 and was employed as a stenographer in the office of the *Mining World* and later of the Billposter's Association of the United States and Canada. The years 1904 and 1905 were spent in mission work under Rev. A. H. Leaman at the Home Mission. During 1905 and 1906 he worked for Albaugh Brothers, a Brethren mail order firm. He was married to Anna Annacker in 1905, by Rev. A. H. Leaman. She was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1880, and came to America in 1886. Though raised a Catholic she joined the Mennonites at the Home (old Mennonite) Mission. In the fall of 1906 a new mission station was opened under the leadership of Rev. A. H. Leaman on 26th Street, Chicago, and A. M. Eash became its superintendent. He was ordained to the ministry at the Home Mission in September, 1909, by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker of Freeport, Ill. He served as superintendent of the Twenty-sixth Street Mission until July, 1919, when he went to Palestine in the service of the Near East Relief. He had charge of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem. He returned to America in September, 1921, and again assumed charge of the Twenty-Sixth Street Mission where he still serves. In 1921 he was transferred to the Central Conference. He was quite active in general Sunday school work in the Mennonite Illinois District Conference. Since changing his conference affiliation he has been quite active in the Central Conference. He is a member of the Christian Workers' Institute Committee.

---

* Biographies of the Central Conference ministers will be found in W. B. Weaver's *History of the Central Conference,* Danvers, Ill., 1926. The two given here are included because of their connection with the old church.

Jonathan Yoder (1795-1869)

Jonathan (Yony) Yoder (Joder) was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania, on September 2, 1795. It is not known when he was baptized or by whom, but he entered the Amish Mennonite Church when a young man about 20 years old. Yoder had two brothers and five sisters. His mother, Jacobina Esh, was born in Switzerland about 1760 and his father, David Yoder, in Berks County, Pennsylvania. He had little schooling except that which he obtained at a subscription school while he lived in Berks County. Although a carpenter and farmer, he later gained sufficient education to enable him to become a teacher in the subscription schools of the day. He could read and write both English and German. Jonathan Yoder was married in 1816 to Magdalena Wagner, born 1793, daughter of Zacharias Wagner who came over from Hesse, Germany. To this union eleven children were born. They were Leah, Joash, Elias, Elizabeth, Sarah, Amos, Jonathan, Magdalena, Asa, Catherine, and Anna. Yoder lived in a number of different places including Berks, Mifflin, and Juniata Counties, Pennsylvania, and McLean County, Illinois, near Carlock. He was chosen preacher in 1825 and later bishop. In 1849 his two sons, Elias and Amos, and his brother Joseph came to McLean County, Illinois. Elias settled in Dry Grove Township on what is now known as the Kinsinger farm. His brother Amos came to the same place. In the spring of 1851 Yoder and the rest of the family came to Dry Grove Township, McLean County. Mr. John Ritter, a friend of Yoder, who lived in the same county with him in Pennsylvania, came to McLean County, Illinois, for a few years and then moved to Oregon. Mr. Ritter wrote to Yoder encouraging him to come to Illinois. Partly because of this encouragement and also because several of his children were here, he came to this state. He bought a forty-acre farm not far from his son, Elias, and engaged in farming until about 1860 when he and his wife went to live with his son, Amos. Here Mrs. Yoder died February 2, 1869. Yoder then went to live with his daughter Mrs. John Sharp near Congerville, Illinois.

When Yoder came to McLean County, he became the leader of the Amish people of Danvers and Dry Grove Townships. He also had quite a large following of his own people from Pennsylvania who came about the same time he did.

Soon after his arrival he organized a congregation and they held meetings in the homes of the members. In the spring of 1853 a church house was built at Rock Creek, where are now the Rock Creek Fair Grounds, about five miles north of Danvers. Yoder was not only a leader in his own congregation, but also a recognized leader in the Amish conferences in America that were held throughout the United States. He was moderator of the first Amish conference held in Wayne County, Ohio, in 1862 and active in those that followed.

He was a man of great physical strength and endurance. He was able to earn a living for a large family and in addition perform the ministerial duties that devolved upon him. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, of reason and excellent judgment. He was of a generous and peaceful nature and yet very firm in his convictions. Although he was rather reserved, yet he had a kind and jovial disposition which made him beloved by all who became acquainted with him. He was a typical Amishman from Pennsylvania and was conservative in his views. He believed in the conventional form of Amish dress, bonnets and veils for women, hooks and eyes and long hair for men. Yet he was progressive when compared with the other Amish bishops of his day. He very often showed a liberal attitude toward new things that came up. The story is told that he met with a number of Amish bishops in Central Illinois to discuss the question as to whether young men should be allowed to wear neckties. After the bishops had assembled one of them brought the pipes and tobacco and gave a pipe to Yoder. He held it a while and then threw it down and said to the other bishops: "We have met to consider whether the young men can wear neckties and yet we ourselves engage in this filthy habit of smoking." It is said that the meeting adjourned without discussing the question of neckties.

Yoder, judging by the work he accomplished, was a man of executive ability, an original thinker and had great initiative. He had the marks of leadership. He filled a large place in his day because the Amish of Dry Grove and Danvers Townships were in need of a leader at this time. He fills a large place in the history of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. His death came in rather an unusual way. A ministers' meeting was held at the home of his daughter, Mrs. John Sharp, in the latter part of January, 1869. At the noon hour when Mrs. Sharp invited the ministers to the dining room, Rev. Yoder said he did not care to eat and would rather lie down and rest. The other ministers went to the table and after dinner when they came back into the room they found that he was passing away. He died January 28, 1869, at the age of seventy-four years and was buried on Simon Lantz's farm now the Lantz Cemetery a few miles southeast of Carlock. Jacob Zehr, Christian Risser, and Joseph Stuckey gave appropriate remarks at the funeral. He died before the Stuckey schism which led to the Central conference.

SMALLER GROUPS

Reformed Mennonite Church

MICHAEL DETER (1857-)

Preacher Michael Deter was born March 23, 1857 in Franklin County near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, to Andrew and Lizzie Hoover Deter. His early life was spent on the farm. He attended the rural schools of Pennsylvania which were quite meager. In the spring of 1876 he came to Morrison, Illinois, and worked on various farms north of town. In 1881 he went to California but returned four years later to Morrison. He was married to Susie Bristle on May 20, 1886, and settled on the farm at her home. In the fall of 1889 he moved to Morrison. Mrs. Deter died in the spring of 1910. There were no children. On January 25, 1914 he was married to Emma Landis. They moved to Sterling in the spring of 1921. He "gave himself up" in 1892, and a year later was baptized into church membership. About 1898 he along with Christian Schwenck was appointed and a year later was ordained to the office of deacon. He filled this position until he was elected in 1909 and ordained a year later to the office of preacher. He served the Sterling church with Preacher William Miller until the latter's death in 1920. Since that time he has been alone in the ministry of the Sterling church. At present he resides at the corner of Nineteenth Avenue and Fifth Street, Sterling, Illinois.

WILLIAM MILLER (1847-1920)

Preacher William Miller was born August 11, 1847, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He joined the church about 1880, along with eighteen others at the Longenecker meetinghouse in Lancaster County. He was married to Elizabeth Fisher, born March 24, 1845 and died October 16, 1916. Two sons, Christian F. and William, were born to the home. The family removed from Pennsylvania to Illinois in 1884, and located on a farm north of Sterling. Having been deacon for a few years, he entered the ministry in 1894. He died in 1920.

General Conference Mennonite Church

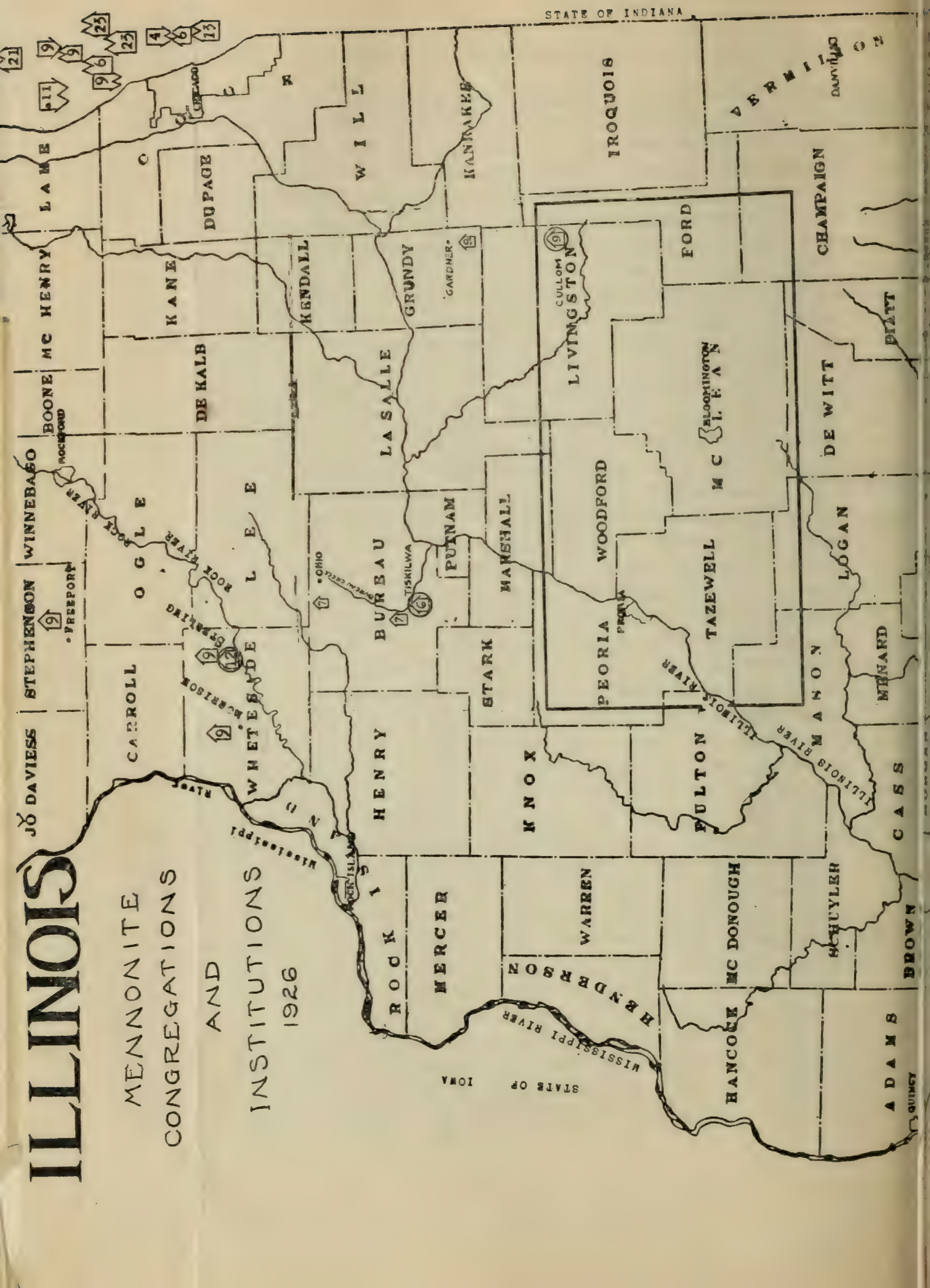
DANIEL HEGE (1826-1862)

Daniel Hege was born December 26, 1826, at Klein Karlbach, Upper Palatinate, Germany, to John and Margaret (Bergtholdt) Hege. His father was a miller by trade. The ancestors came to Germany from Switzerland about the year 1700 A. D. Young Daniel began at six and attended the common schools until his fourteenth year, after which he spent a few years assisting his parents at home. When he had grown old enough he was apprenticed to a merchant, but after a year or two he took up bookbinding and learned that trade. In 1849 he wrote to a friend: "For more than five years I have entertained the wish to do something for my fellowmen. My end and aim is to become a competent teacher, and at the same time a minister of the Gospel, upon whose labors divine blessings may rest." With the uncertainty of compulsory service in the army before him he had deferred entering upon the cherished plans. But when he received word that he was free from military service he immediately (1848) entered an academy at Schiers, Canton Graubuenden, Switzerland. He entered upon the student's life with such zeal that his health broke down after ten months and he was compelled to discontinue his work for six months or more. After recovery he spent another year at the same institution and completed the course there. It was during this period that many Mennonites emigrated from South Germany to the United States. Hege likewise proposed to make this country his future home, and had to a large extent selected his work and prepared himself with this in view. Accordingly after completing his work at Schiers he left for America in November, 1851. After visiting his friends in Cleveland, Ohio, for a few weeks, he went to Cincinnati and spent the winter there. The next spring he went to Indiana, where he stayed for several months with his brother John. In the fall of 1852 he entered the Evangelical Seminary at Marthasville, Missouri, and for the three years following attended that institution, gaining thus a thorough education. He taught a private school near Bloomington, Illinois, during 1855-1856. For some time during the latter year he also taught at West Point, Iowa, where he was ordained to the ministry on October 13, 1856. During the winter of 1856-57 he was private instructor to three children near Oskaloosa, Iowa. After this he again returned to West Point, where he taught and preached for several years. On July 19, 1857, he was married to Barbara Lehmann. About the year 1859 the church at Summerfield, Illinois, gave him a call to become their pastor. He accepted the call and soon entered upon this work with great zeal and devotion. He soon succeeded in stimulating the church to take interest in mission work and other activities. In 1861, Hege attended the session of the General Conference at Wadsworth. He was chosen secretary, and afterwards was selected as home missionary and solicitor for the proposed conference school. In May, 1862 he entered upon this special task and for seven months pushed this work with great vigor and remarkable success. Perhaps from too great a strain on his nervous system he was taken ill on his return from Iowa to Summerfield and died on Dec. 30, 1862.

CHRISTIAN KREHBIEL (1832-1909)

Christian Krehbiel was born October 18, 1832, at Weierhof, a small village romantically located at the foot of the Donnersberg in the Bavarian Palatinate. His parents, well-to-do farmers, were John and Katherine Krehbiel. The ancestry, like that of most Mennonites in southern Germany, traces back to Switzerland. Under pressure of persecution one Jost Krehbiel (Kraehenbuehel) left Switzerland about 1671 and settled in southern Germany. To him in the sixth generation Christian Krehbiel traces his descent. Beginning with his sixth year, Christian attended the schools of that section until his eleventh year, when his parents moved to Einhoffen in upper Bavaria, twenty-five miles from Munich. The school which he attended there for three years was very inferior. At fourteen attendance upon school ceased, except at a certain Sunday School, where attendance was required by law until the seventeenth year. After having lived in Bavaria for seven years, a brother, older than he, was drafted for military service. Being faithful adherents to the doctrine of non-resistance, the parents were anxious to shield their sons from military service. Accordingly they sold their farm at a great sacrifice, paid a thousand "Gulden" for the release of their son from service, and in the spring of 1851 left the old homestead and with a number of families came to America. The company made a temporary stop of nine months near Haysville, Ashland County, Ohio. During the summer of that year Christian Krehbiel worked on a farm. The place for ultimate settlement selected for the company was southeastern Iowa. To prepare somewhat for the coming of the families, Krehbiel, now nineteen years old, and another young man, proceeded to Iowa in the fall of 1851. Going to Cincinnati, Ohio, then a small village, they took steamboat and went down the Ohio River to Cairo, Illinois, then up the Mississippi to Keokuk, Iowa, stopping in Lee County where a few families of Mennonites had already settled. Krehbiel hired to one of them for a year at one hundred dollars. The next spring his parents and the rest of the company followed. On March 14, 1858, he was married to Susan A. Ruth, daughter of the minister David Ruth. He removed to Summerfield, Illinois in March, 1860. Here as in Iowa, he followed farming as an occupation. During his nineteen years' residence in that section he lived on four different farms. Beginning with almost nothing, by 1867 he had gained enough to own a nice farm, directly adjacent to the little village of Summerfield, on which he resided for twelve years. Krehbiel's life was, however, not destined to run the quiet course of purely agricultural pursuits. In September, 1864 he was drafted to serve in the United States Army. From this service he was personally relieved by hiring a substitute. Two months later, the pastor of the church, Daniel Hege, having died, he was elected to the ministry. This gave new direction to his life and opened the door to a most active and varied career. At the General Conference held at Summerfield in 1863 he had already been a participant as a lay-member. It was at his suggestion that Ohio was selected as the place at which to locate the contemplated school of the Conference. At the dedication services in 1866 of the conference school at Wadsworth he preached the first sermon with stirring effect. In 1869, when contention had arisen between the members of the faculty, it was through his efforts that peace was restored. He was entrusted the delicate task of personally visiting the Zion church in Iowa and winning their consent to Showalter's continuation at Wadsworth. The Western District Conference, which met for the first time in the Zion church, Iowa, October, 1868, was originated by Christian Krehbiel, he having first conceived and proposed the idea and agitated the matter until the conference was realized. For a number of years he served as home missionary of that body, and was always a leader in the work. It was about this time that he originated the idea of a Mennonite colony. He labored for a number of years until his hopes and efforts materialized in the settlement in Harvey and McPherson County, Kansas, with Halstead as headquarters. He was the leader of this entire movement. As early as 1870 he had been in correspondence with European Mennonites who contemplated immigration to America. In 1872 four young men from Russia came to see him at Summerfield. Later other delegations came to consult with him until he was in touch with all the leaders of the various immigrating churches. Summerfield for several years became the first objective point for Mennonite immigrants to this country. Many families took up temporary residence there until they could make final selection for settlement. Taking hold of the immigration problem, he devised plans for successful settlement in this country. It was through him that the Mennonite Board of Guardians was originated. He, as president, formulated its plans and directed its activity. Through this committee large pecuniary savings were gained for immigrants, much annoyance and hardship was averted, and many poor Mennonites, who would otherwise have had to remain in Russia were enabled to come to America. In 1871, missionary interest was greatly stimulated. S. S. Haury, student at the conference school and member of Krehbiel's Church, had announced his intention to become a missionary. He offered himself up to the Amsterdam Missionary Society. Krehbiel persuaded Haury to offer himself to the Conference. Thus the Conference entered upon an independent missionary enterprise, to the good of the Conference itself and the blessing of the Indians. In

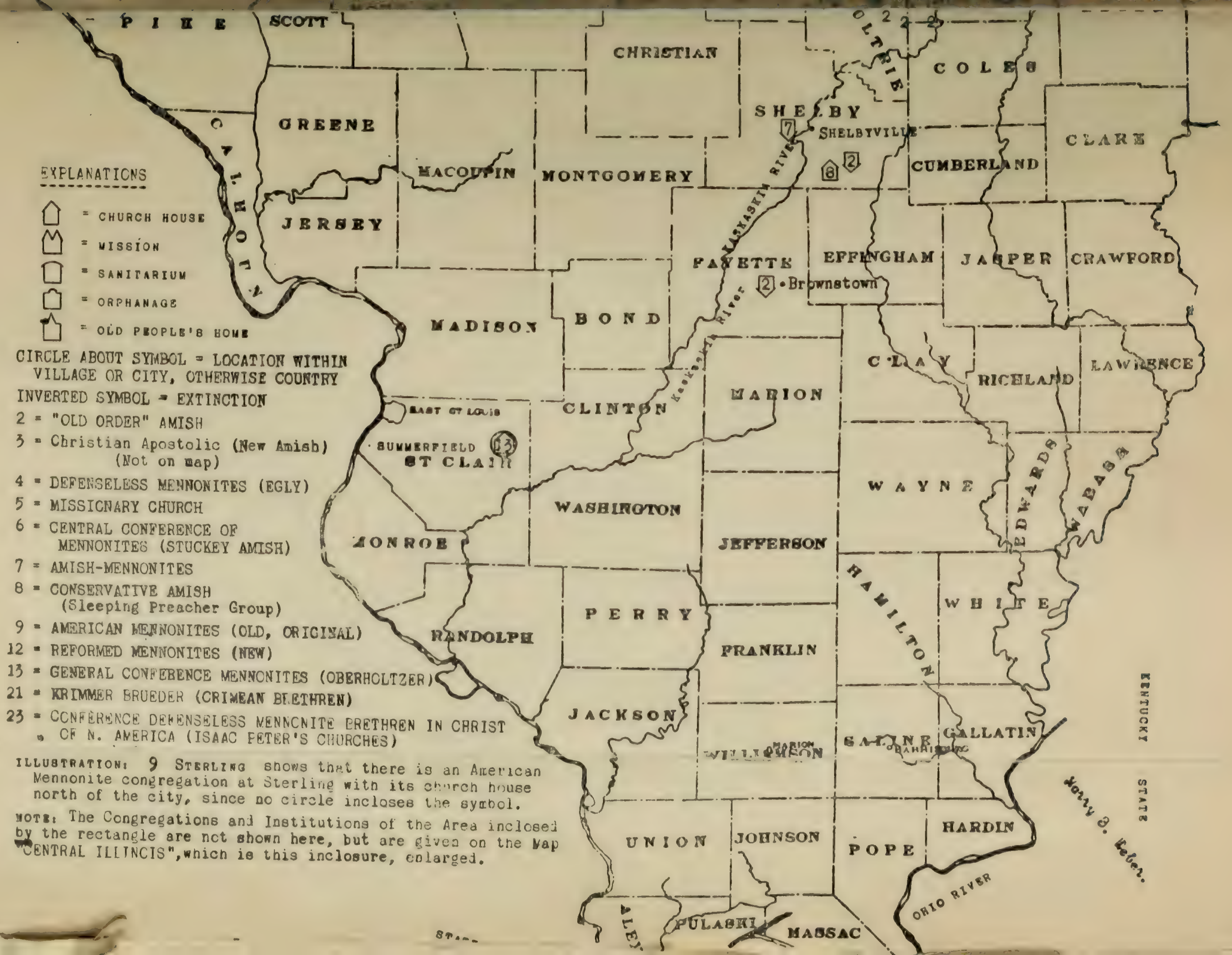
1872 the Conference created the Foreign Mission Department. Krehbiel was elected a member of the Board, and the Board in organizing elected him to the presidency, in which capacity he served for twenty-four years. He planned and guided the actual mission work as carried on in the field. Living close to the mission field he often visited it. He made it a point to be familiar with all its details. Under his strong and wise guidance the work overcame all the many trials which beset it. The conference mission under his guidance experienced a steady, rapid growth and never retrogressed, but every valuable position once gained was held, until the Mennonite Mission ranked as one of the best of all missions among the Indians in the United States. In March, 1875 he presided at the organization of the church at Halstead, Kansas. This church was the offspring of the church at Summerfield. In March, 1879 he removed with his family to this place and settled on a farm adjacent to the town. In the fall preceding, the church at Halstead knowing of his intention to remove to this place, had elected him as their pastor. He had assisted in the organization of the Kansas Conference in 1877, and residing now in this district he spent much of his time visiting among the churches and developing the spirit of cooperation. He was among those who promoted the plans for a school in Kansas. When the Kansas Conference decided to permanently carry on a school, it was through his influence that the Halstead church made her very liberal offer to furnish the buildings for the school. In connection with this school the Mission Board tried for two years to carry on an Indian Industrial School. When it proved only partially successful, Krehbiel undertook to carry on this school himself. Accordingly he established it on his farm in 1887 and conducted it until 1896. About one hundred and fifty different Indian children came under his personal influence and care during this time, many of whom are now among the most promising young men and women in the mission field. Foreseeing that the United States Government was about to make such changes as would make the industrial school with the Indians impossible, he had in 1884 interested some others and organized the Mennonite Orphan Aid Society. Of this society he was president, and the institution was located at his home, he being its superintendent. He died April 30, 1909 (Taken largely from Krehbiel—*History of the Mennonite General Conference,* 1898.)



ILLINOIS

MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS 1926

STATE OF INDIANA
STATE OF IOWA
JO DAVIESS
STEPHENSON
FREEPORT
WINNEBAGO
ROCKFORD
BOONE
MC HENRY
LAKE
COOK
CHICAGO
DU PAGE
KANE
DE KALB
CARROLL
OGLE
LEE
WHITESIDE
STERLING
MORRISON
ROCK ISLAND
ROCK RIVER
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
KENDALL
WILL
KANKAKEE
GRUNDY
GARDNER
LASALLE
BUREAU
OHIO
TISKILWA
PUTNAM
MARSHALL
STARK
HENRY
MERCER
KNOX
WARREN
HENDERSON
PEORIA
WOODFORD
TAZEWELL
LIVINGSTON
CULLOM
IROQUOIS
FORD
MC LEAN
BLOOMINGTON
VERMILION
DANVILLE
CHAMPAIGN
DE WITT
PIATT
LOGAN
MASON
MENARD
CASS
FULTON
MC DONOUGH
HANCOCK
SCHUYLER
BROWN
ADAMS
QUINCY
ILLINOIS RIVER
21
11
9
6
23
4
13
19
12
7
16


PIKE
SCOTT
CHRISTIAN
COLES
OLTRIE
2
2
SHELBY
SHELBYVILLE
7
8
2
CLARK
CUMBERLAND
GREENE
CALHOUN
MACOUPIN
MONTGOMERY
JERSEY
KASKASKIA RIVER
FAYETTE
EFFINGHAM
JASPER
CRAWFORD
2
Brownstown
MADISON
BOND
Kaskaskia River
CLAY
RICHLAND
LAWRENCE
CLINTON
MARION
EAST ST LOUIS
SUMMERFIELD
13
ST CLAIR
WAYNE
EDWARDS
WABASH
WASHINGTON
JEFFERSON
MONROE
HAMILTON
WHITE
PERRY
RANDOLPH
FRANKLIN
JACKSON
WILLIAMSON
MARION
SALINE
HARRISBURG
GALLATIN
KENTUCKY STATE
UNION
JOHNSON
POPE
HARDIN
OHIO RIVER
ALEXANDER
PULASKI
MASSAC

EXPLANATIONS

- ⌂ = CHURCH HOUSE
- ⌂ = MISSION
- ⌂ = SANITARIUM
- ⌂ = ORPHANAGE
- ⌂ = OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

CIRCLE ABOUT SYMBOL = LOCATION WITHIN VILLAGE OR CITY, OTHERWISE COUNTRY

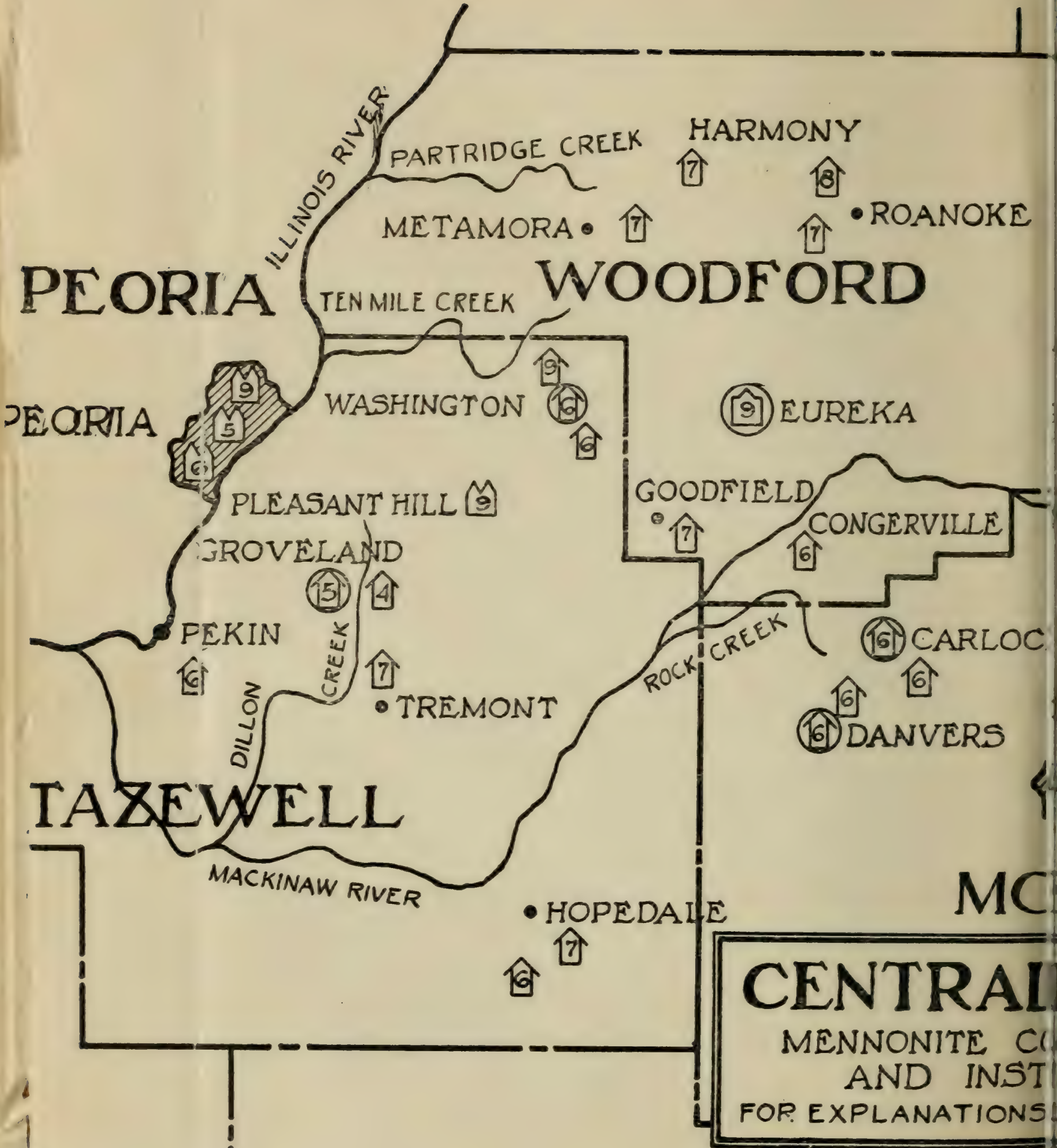
INVERTED SYMBOL = EXTINCTION

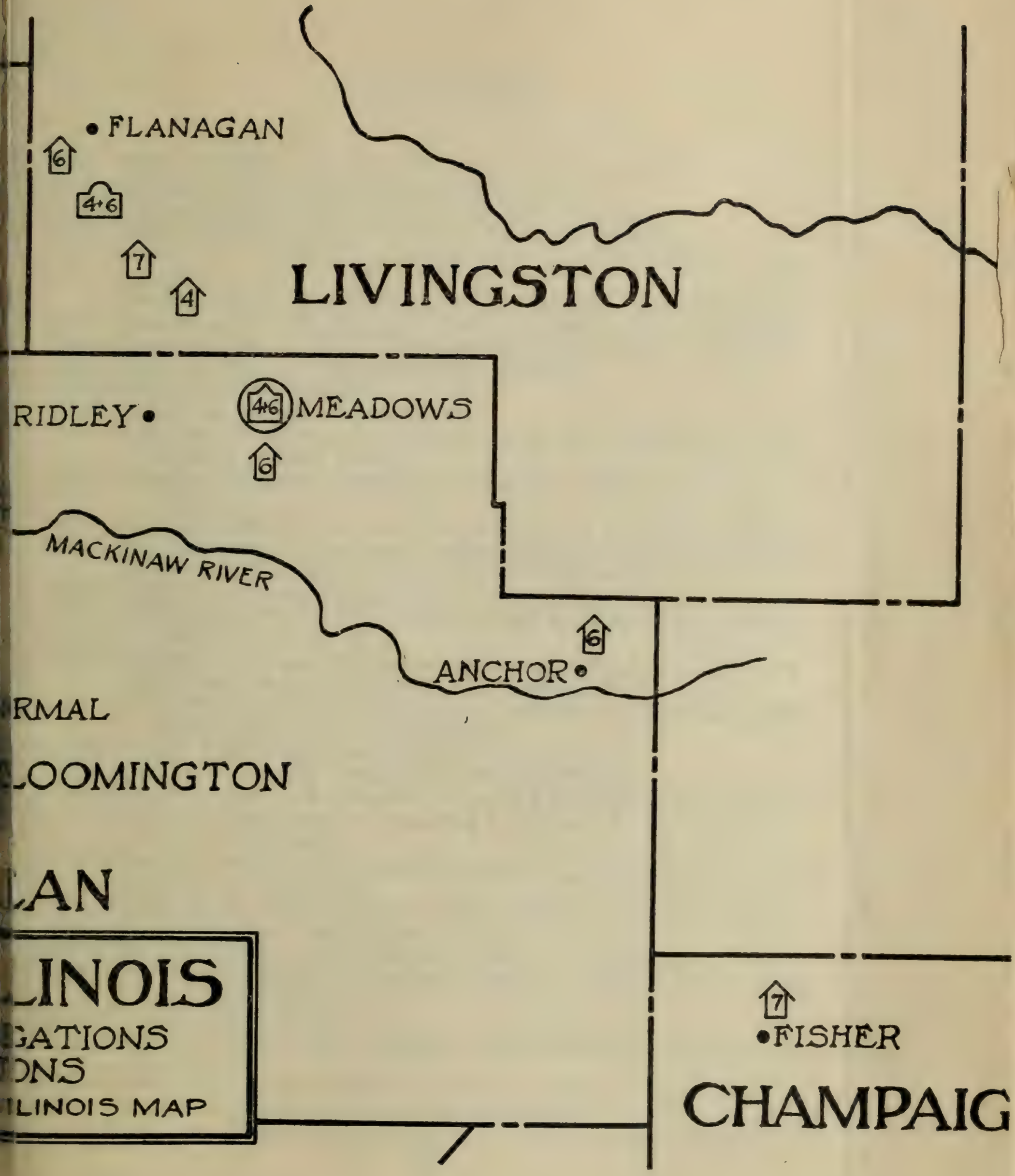
2 = "OLD ORDER" AMISH
3 = Christian Apostolic (New Amish) (Not on map)
4 = DEFENSELESS MENNONITES (EGLY)
5 = MISSIONARY CHURCH
6 = CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES (STUCKEY AMISH)
7 = AMISH-MENNONITES
8 = CONSERVATIVE AMISH (Sleeping Preacher Group)
9 = AMERICAN MENNONITES (OLD, ORIGINAL)
12 = REFORMED MENNONITES (NEW)
13 = GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITES (OBERHOLTZER)
21 = KRIMMER BRUEDER (CRIMEAN BRETHREN)
23 = CONFERENCE DEFENSELESS MENNONITE BRETHREN IN CHRIST OF N. AMERICA (ISAAC PETER'S CHURCHES)

ILLUSTRATION: 9 STERLING shows that there is an American Mennonite congregation at Sterling with its church house north of the city, since no circle incloses the symbol.

NOTE: The Congregations and Institutions of the Area inclosed by the rectangle are not shown here, but are given on the Map "CENTRAL ILLINOIS", which is this inclosure, enlarged.

Harry F. Weber.


ILLINOIS RIVER
PARTRIDGE CREEK
HARMONY
METAMORA
ROANOKE
PEORIA
WOODFORD
TEN MILE CREEK
PEORIA
WASHINGTON
EUREKA
PLEASANT HILL
GOODFIELD
CONGERVILLE
GROVELAND
PEKIN
CREEK
DILLON
TREMONT
ROCK CREEK
CARLOC
DANVERS
TAZEWELL
MACKINAW RIVER
HOPEDALE
MC
CENTRAL
MENNONITE C
AND INST
FOR EXPLANATIONS
9
5
6
7
8
16
15
4


FLANAGAN
6
4+6
7
4
LIVINGSTON
RIDLEY
4+6
MEADOWS
6
MACKINAW RIVER
6
ANCHOR
RMAL
LOOMINGTON
LAN
LINOIS
GATIONS
ONS
LINOIS MAP
7
FISHER
CHAMPAIG

CHRONOLOGY

1496—Birth of Menno Simons at Witmarsum, Friesland.
1517—Beginning of the Reformation by Luther.
1521—Beginning of the Swiss Reformation by Zwingli.
1525—Birth of the Mennonite Church at Zurich, Switzerland.
1527—First Martyr, Felix Manz, drowned by decree of the Zurich Council.
—The first known confession of faith was drawn up at Schleitheim.
1542—Imperial edict issued against Menno, putting a price on his head.
1544—Countess Anne in West Friesland first used the term "Menist."
1561—Death of Menno at Wuestenfelde, Holstein.
1568—Death of Dirck Philips.
1614—Last Swiss Martyr, Hans Landis.
1632—Dortrecht Confession of Faith drawn up by seventeen congregations of Central Europe.
1663—Cornelius Plockhoy established temporary Mennonite colony in Delaware.
1673—Joliet and Marquette made first explorations in Illinois territory.
1683—First permanent Mennonite settlement in America at Germantown, Pennsylvania, from Crefeld, Germany.
1693—Origin of the Amish Branch in Switzerland, Jacob Amman, leader.
1708—First Mennonite meeting house erected in America, at Germantown, Pennsylvania.
1717—The Illinois country formerly governed as part of Canada was incorporated in the government of Louisiana.
1725—Franconia Conference, Pennsylvania, session, the first Mennonite conference on record in America.
1730—(about) First Amish immigration to America.
1778—The Illinois country became a county of Virginia.
1784—Illinois became a part of a territory under the Federal Government.
1787—First Protestant sermon preached in Illinois by James Smith, a Baptist minister.
1809—Illinois territory was separated from the Indiana territory and given own governor.
1812—Origin of the Reformed Mennonites (Herrites) in Pennsylvania.
1818—Illinois admitted to the Union as a state.
1829—First Amishman (or Mennonite) comes to Illinois.
1829-1852—First period of Mennonite settlement in Illinois, along creeks and timberland.
1831-1832—The Black Hawk War.
1832—Origin of the Christian Apostolic (New Amish) Church in Switzerland.
1833—First Amish congregation organized in Illinois; the Spring Bay or Partridge church with nine members.
—Main Line of Mennonites appears in Illinois at Washington.

1835—Organization of Mackinaw River Meeting (Amish-Mennonite).
1837—Organization of the Wesley City Congregation (then Amish but later Defenseless Mennonite).
—Organization of Dillon Creek Congregation (Amish-Mennonite).
1840—(about) Mennonites come to Scales Mound (extinct).
1842—First Mennonite settlers come to Summerfield, Illinois.
1846—Appearance of the Christian Apostolic (New Amish) in America.
1847—Appearance of the Reformed Mennonites (Herrites) in Illinois.
—Origin of the Oberholzerites (General Conference of Mennonites) in Pennsylvania.
1848—The first permanent railroad was built in Illinois.
1851—Organization of the Rock Creek (Yoder) congregation (Central Conference).
1852—Appearance of the Christian Apostolic (New Amish) in Illinois.
—(old) Mennonites open settlement at Sterling, Illinois.
1852-1866—Second period of Mennonite settlement in Illinois, upon the prairie land.
1853—First Amish (or Mennonite) meeting house in Illinois erected by the Rock Creek (Jonathan Yoder) Church.
1854—(perhaps later) Organization of Hessian Mennonite congregation south of Danvers, Illinois. (Central Conference).
—Organization of Delavan Prairie congregation (Amish-Mennonite) near Hopedale.
—Partridge or Spring Bay congregation erected meeting house, the first among the Amish-Mennonites.
1855—Appearance of the Brethren in Christ (River Brethren) in Illinois.
1856—The Union Mennonite congregation near Washington erected brick meeting house.
1858—Mennonites open settlement in Livingston County, Illinois near Cullom.
—Mennonite (General Conference) congregation near Summerfield, Illinois, erected brick meeting house.
—Science Ridge (Mennonite) congregation near Sterling, Illinois, erected meeting house.
1860—Formation of the General Conference of Mennonites.
—Organization of the Gridley Prairie congregation (Waldo Amish-Mennonite) near Flanagan.
1862—First General Amish Conference for United States and Canada, held in Wayne County, Ohio. Moderator, Jonathan Yoder.
1863—Hessian Mennonites south of Danvers erected church house.
—The Mennonite congregation near Freeport erected meeting house.
1864—John F. Funk published, in Chicago, the Herald of Truth, the first English paper for Mennonites.
1865—Mennonites open settlement near Morrison, Illinois.
—John F. Funk ordained as English preacher for the (old) Mennonite congregation near Gardner, Illinois.
—Old Order Amish from Pennsylvania open settlement at Arthur, Illinois.
—Summerfield (General Conference) congregation starts Sunday school.
1866—A General Amish Conference held in John Strubhar's barn near Danvers, Illinois.

—Origin of the Defenseless Mennonites (Egly).

—Union congregation near Washington, Illinois, starts a Sunday school.

1867—The Reformed Mennonite congregation at Sterling erected meeting house.

—The Waldo Amish-Mennonite congregation near Flanagan erected meeting house.

1868—First session of the Western District Conference of the General Conference of Mennonites.

1869—East Washington (Calvary) Central Conference congregation erected meeting house.

—First Central Conference Sunday school held in the Rock Creek (Yoder) Church.

—Origin of the Krimmer Brueder in Russia.

1871—Chicago fire destroyed Peter Neff's enlarged residence and ended the old Chicago Mennonite congregation.

1872—First session of the Illinois District Mennonite Conference, held with the Science Ridge congregation near Sterling.

—North Danvers meeting house erected.

—Origin of the Stuckey Amish (Central Conference of Mennonites).

1873—Board of Guardians organized at Summerfield, Illinois, to assist the Mennonite migration from Russia.

—The Mennonite congregation near Morrison erected meeting-house.

—The Willow Springs congregation near Tiskilwa (Amish-Mennonite) erected meeting house.

1874—Mennonites migrate from Russia to United States and Canada.

1875—Salem congregation near Gridley (Defenseless Mennonite-Egly) erected meeting house.

—The Amish-Mennonite congregation near Roanoke erected meeting house.

1876—The Amish-Mennonite congregation near Hopedale erected meeting house.

1878—The last Amish General Conference of United States and Canada.

1880—John D. Kauffman begins his "Spirit" preaching in Elkhart County, Indiana.

1882—Amish-Mennonites develop group consciousness in Illinois and farther West.

—Central Conference congregation near Flanagan erected meeting house.

—John S. Coffman holds first series of evangelistic meetings in Illinois with the Cullom congregation.

—The Mennonite congregation of Cullom erected meeting house.

1883—First session of Defenseless Mennonite Conference (Egly).

—The Amish-Mennonite congregation near Goodfield erected meeting house.

1890—Death of Henry Egly at Geneva, Adams County, Indiana.

—First session of the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference, at Sycamore Grove, Cass County, Missouri.

1891—Central Conference congregation near Meadows erected meeting house.

1892—First General Sunday School Conference (Old Mennonites) held near Goshen, Indiana.
—Organization of the Mennonite Evangelizing Board (Old Mennonite).
1893—East White Oak Central Conference congregation near Carlock erected meeting house.
—The Mennonite Home Mission opened in Chicago.
1895—Central Conference congregation south of Washington erected meeting house.
—The East Bend Amish-Mennonite congregation near Fisher erected meeting house.
1896—First session of the Illinois (Old) Mennonite Sunday school conference, held with the Science Ridge congregation near Sterling.
1897—Formation of the General Conference of (Old) Mennonites.
1898—Central Conference congregation of Congerville organized.
—C. R. Egle purchases printing press, begins printing German paper, "Heils Bote" for the Defenseless Conference (Egly).
—"Zion's Call," edited in English by D. N. Claudon in interest of Salem Orphanage.
—Origin of the Missionary Church Association.
—Salem Orphanage founded near Flanagan, Illinois (Defenseless and Central Conference).
1899—John S. Coffman died at Elkhart, Indiana.
1900—First Bible Conference in Illinois for (Old) Mennonites, held with Science Ridge congregation near Sterling.
—Purchase of building for the Home Mission in Chicago, the first owned mission building for the (Old) Mennonites.
—Central Conference Sunday School Association organized.
1902—Boynton Central Conference congregation near Hopedale erected meeting house.
—Death of Joseph Stuckey at Danvers, Illinois.
1905—Bethel Central Conference congregation near Pekin organized and meeting house erected.
1906—Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities organized by combining the Mennonite Board of Charitable Homes and Missions with the Mennonite Evangelizing and Benevolent Board.
—Twenty-sixth Street Mission, Chicago, opened by the (Old) Mennonites.
1907—Origin of the Sleeping Preacher Group of Conservative Amish (Kauffman).
—Representatives of the Isaac Peters' Churches (Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ) start mission work in Chicago.
1908—Beginning of the Happy Hour Mission in Chicago.
—Establishment of Salem Gospel Mission, Chicago (Defenseless Conference—Egly).
—Incorporation of the Defenseless Mennonite Conference (Egly).
—Organization of the Central (Illinois) Conference of Mennonites.
1909—Central Conference Mennonite Gospel Mission, Chicago, opened.
1910—Central Conference congregation near Archer erected meeting house.

—"Christian Evangel," the organ of the Central Conference, established.

—Erection and dedication of the Twenty-sixth Street Mission, Chicago by the (Old) Mennonites.

—Formation of the Conference of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America. (Isaac Peters' Churches).

1911—Central Conference congregation of Normal erected meeting house.

—Ministerial Association of the Central Conference organized.

1912—Incorporation of the Congo Inland Mission (Central and Defenseless Mennonites).

—The Mt. Hermon Sleeping Preacher congregation near Shelbyville erected meeting house.

1913—All-Mennonite Convention started, first session at Berne, Indiana.

—Central Conference congregation of Tiskilwa erected meeting house.

—First Christian Endeavor Rally for the Central Conference.

—Defenseless Mennonite (Egly) Conference adopted "Zion's Call as their official organ.

1914—Central Conference Christian Endeavor Union formed.

—Central Conference Mennonite Gospel Mission, Peoria, opened.

—Happy Hour Mission in Chicago closed.

1915—First Sunday school convention of the Defenseless Mennonites (Egly) of Illinois and the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren (Russian) of Chicago, held in Salem Church near Gridley.

—Krimmer Brueder set up printing press and open up mission work in Chicago.

1916—Central Conference congregation of Carlock erected meeting house.

—The General Conference Mennonite Mission opened in Chicago.

1917—Christian Workers' Conference of the Central Conference organized.

—Mennonite Bible Mission, Chicago, opened as an unofficial mission of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren (Russian) by Wiens.

—Organization of the Illinois District Mission Board of the (Old) Mennonites.

1918—Defenseless Conference (Egly) started Brotherhood Aid Association.

1919—Dedication of newly erected modern mission building of the (Old) Mennonite Home Mission, Chicago.

—First meeting of the Illinois District Woman's Missionary Society of the (Old) Mennonites, held at the Home Mission, Chicago.

—Garden Street (Peoria) mission work opened by the (Old) Mennonites.

—"Good Tidings" makes its appearance as Defenseless Mennonite Brethren (Russian) paper in English.

—Organization of the Mennonite Sanitarium Association (Central and Defenseless Conferences).

—The Defenseless Mennonite Brethren (Russian) purchased a church building for the Brighton Mission Chapel, Chicago.

1920—Last session of the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference, at Pleasant Grove, Tremont, Illinois.

—Merging of the Amish-Mennonites of Illinois and the Illinois District Conference of the (Old) Mennonites.

—Pleasant Hill Rural Mission work opened by the Illinois District Mission Board of the (Old) Mennonites.

1921—Erection of the (Old) Mennonite Home for the Aged, Eureka.

—First session of the new (after Amish-Mennonite and Mennonite merger) Illinois District Conference, at Science Ridge Mennonite church, Sterling, Illinois.

—"Zion's Tidings," first issue of combined "Zion's Call" (Defenseless—Egly) and "Good Tidings" (Defenseless Mennonite Brethren—Russian).

1922—First class graduated from the Nurses' Training School of the Mennonite Sanitarium at Bloomington.

1923—Dedication of the Old People's Home, Meadows, Illinois (Central and Defenseless Mennonites).

—Twenty-sixth Street Mission, Chicago, joins Central Conference.

1924—Central Conference purchases Twenty-sixth Street Mission Building, Chicago, from (Old) Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities.

—Ladies' Aid Society of the Central Conference organized.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I

GENERAL WORKS

The following list contains titles of works useful for a historical introduction to general Mennonite history. The list is by no means exhaustive. Detailed bibliographies will be found in books such as those written by C. Henry Smith. Smith's writings as well as the Mennonite History by Hartzler and Kauffman contain valuable sections on the history of the Mennonites of Illinois. The general Illinois state histories contain practically no references to Mennonites.

Correll, Ernst, *Das Schweizerische Täufer-Mennonitentum.* Tübingen, (Germany), 1925.

Dosker, H. E., *The Dutch Anabaptists,* Philadelphia, 1921.

Funk, John F., *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers.* Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, Indiana, 1878.

Hartzler, J. S., and Kauffman, Daniel, *Mennonite Church History.* Mennonite Book and Tract Society, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1905.

Hartzler, John Ellsworth, *Education Among the Mennonites of America.* Central Mennonite Publishing Board, Danvers, Illinois, 1925.

Hartzler, J. S., *Mennonites in the World War.* Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1922.

Heatwole, L. J., *Mennonite Handbook of Information.* Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1925.

Historical Sketch of John F. Funk and Abraham K. Funk. James A. Bell Company, Elkhart, Indiana, 1925.

Horsch, John, *Menno Simons, His Life, Labor and Teachings,* Scottdale, Pa., 1916.

Huffman, Jasper Abraham, *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church.* The Bethel Publishing Company, New Carlisle, Ohio, 1920.

Krehbiel, H. P., *The History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America.* Canton, Ohio, 1898.

Manual of New Testament Teaching, etc., (Reformed Mennonite Church). Baltimore, 1893.

Mennonitisches Lexikon, edited by Christian Hege and Christian Neff, Frankfurt A. M. and Weierhof (Germany), 1913f.

Musser, Daniel, *The Reformed Mennonite Church.* Inquirer Printing and Publishing Company, Lancaster, Pa., 1878.

Newman, A. H., *History of Anti-Pedobaptism to* 1609, Philadelphia, 1896.

Smith, C. H., and Hirschler, E. J., *The Story of Bluffton College.* Bluffton, Ohio, 1925.

Smith, C. Henry, *The Mennonites, A Brief History.* Mennonite Book Concern, Berne, Indiana, 1920.

Smith, C. Henry, *The Mennonites of America.* Goshen, Indiana, 1909.

Steiner, M. S., *John S. Coffman, Mennonite Evangelist.* Mennonite Book and Tract Society, Spring Grove, Pa., 1903.

II

Illinois Mennonite History

The material bearing more directly on Illinois Mennonite history has been classified into four groups, Books and Pamphlets, Periodicals, Reports, and Manuscripts.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Centennial History of Illinois. Springfield, Illinois, 1920.

Commemorative Biographical Sketch of Rev. Jonathan Yoder. By his son Joash Yoder, written in 1875, printed in 1900.

Christner, Jacob, *Kauffman's Sermons* (undated).

Eash, A. M., *After Ten Years.* Chicago, 1916.

Elkhart Institute Memorial. Elkhart Institute Alumni Association, Goshen, Indiana, 1903.

Harnish, John L., *Fifth Anniversary of the Peoria Mission.* 1924.

Hostetler, Pius, *Life, Preaching, and Labors of John D. Kauffman.* Shelbyville, Illinois, 1916.

Literary Helper, The. Ciceronian Literary Society for Mennonite Literary Society of Illinois, Sterling, Illinois, 1925.

Moses, *Illinois, Historical and Statistical.* Fergus Printing Co., Chicago, 1895.

Noah Troyer's Sermons. Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, Indiana, 1880.

Parrish, *Historic Illinois.* A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1906.

Weaver, William B., *History of the Central Conference Mennonite Church,* Danvers, Ill., 1926.

FILES OF PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

Christian Evangel, The. Central Conference Publication Board, July, 1910——, Chicago and Danvers, Illinois.

Christian Exponent, The. The Christian Exponent Company. January, 1924—December, 1928. Wooster, Ohio, and Berne, Indiana.

Christian Monitor, The. Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1909——.

Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblaetter. Viertaljahrschrift herausgegeben von der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois. Chicago, Ill. 1901——.

Good Tidings, (Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ), July 15, 1919 to August, 1921.

Good Tidings. Published Quarterly by the Reformed Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, July, 1922——.

Goshen College. Annual Catalogue, College Record, and miscellaneous other files.

Gospel Herald, The. Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1908——.

Gospel Witness, The. Gospel Witness Company, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1905—1908.

Herald of Truth, The. Chicago and Elkhart, Indiana. January, 1864—April 9, 1908.

Mennonite Family Almanac. Mennonite Publishing House, Elkhart, Indiana and Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1875——.

Mennonite, The. Mennonite Book Concern, Berne, Indiana, 1885——.

Year Books of the:

- (Old) Mennonites. *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory.* Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1905——.
- Central Conference of Mennonites, Central Mennonite Publication Board, Danvers, Ill., 1922——.
- Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of North America, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, (in German) (includes conference reports) 1911——.
- General Conference *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac.* Mennonite Book Concern, Berne, Indiana. 1895——.

Young People's Paper. Young People's Paper Association, Elkhart, Indiana, January 6, 1894—March, 1906.

Zion's Call, 1898—1921.

Zion's Tidings, September 1, 1921——.

REPORTS

Constitution and By-Laws of the:

- Brotherhood Aid Association of the Defenseless Mennonite Conference, Grabill, Indiana.
- Central Conference Mennonite Church. Adopted 1909, Revised 1915.
- Congo Inland Mission, incorporated by the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites and the Defenseless Conference of Mennonites, Bloomington, Illinois, 1912.
- Mennonite Woman's Missionary Society, and Auxiliary Societies, April, 1924.
- Missionary Church Association and the Missionary Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1916, 1922, editions.

Manual of the:

- Defenseless Mennonite Church, Chicago, 1917.
- Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1915.

Minutes of the:

- Amish General Conference, 1862-1878. Elkhart, Indiana.
- Defenseless Mennonite Conference, 1883——.
- General Conference, twenty-second session, held in Perkasie, Pennsylvania, August 29 to September 5, 1920.
- General Conference, twenty-third session, held August 29 to Sept. 6 at Freeman, South Dakota, 1921.
- Illinois District Mennonite Conference, 1872—— (Manuscript).

Illinois District Mission Board, 1917—— (Manuscript).
Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1864-1929. Scottdale, Pa., 1930.
Mennonite General Conference, with discussions since 1890, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., 1919.
Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference 1890-1920. (Printed reports in both German and English.)

Report of:
All-Mennonite Convention, 1913——.
Dedicatory Service and Missionary Conference held at the Home Mission, Chicago, Illinois, January 5-7, 1919.
Men's Missionary Conference held in Chicago, Illinois, December 12, 13, 1917.

MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

Answers to Questionnaire.
County Recorders' Files.
Family Records.
Kirchner, George L., *Mennonites of McLean County*, paper read before the McLean County Historical society, 1910.
Local church minutes and records.
Personal Letters.
Note books and diaries of various leaders.
Weaver, William B., Danvers, Illinois. Notes for the *History of the Central Conference Mennonite Church.*
Weber, Franklin Harry. *History of the American Mennonites of Illinois*, Bluffton, Ohio, May 15, 1923. M. A. Thesis.

LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES

Map of Illinois Mennonite Congregations and Institutions At end
Map of Central Illinois Mennonite Congregations and Institutions At end
Mennonite Population in all countries 20
Diagram of Mennonite Branches in America opposite 32
Summary of Mennonite Branches in America 58
Early Amish Settlers in Illinois 87-91
Illinois District Mennonite Conference Sessions 114
(Old) Mennonite Bishops 115-116
Sessions of the Western District Amish-Mennonite Conference 190-191
Partridge and Metamora Ministers 199
Workers at (Old) Mennonite Home Mission, Chicago 289-291
Workers at Twenty-Sixth Street Mission, Chicago 302
Workers at Garden Street Mission, Peoria 313
Early Amish Congregations in Illinois 335
Defenseless Mennonite Congregations 339
Annual Conferences of the Defenseless Conference 367
Mennonite Missions in Chicago 424
Report of Brotherhood Aid Association, August 25, 1925 427-428
Charter Churches of the Central Conference 486
Central Conference Churches 487
Sessions of the Central Conference 488
Old Order Amish Ministers in the Arthur Settlement 541-542

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

First Group, Between pages 128 *and* 129

Union Mennonite Church near Washington
Science Ridge Mennonite Church near Sterling
Mennonite Church near Freeport
Morrison Mennonite Church
Cullom Mennonite Church
Sterling Reformed Mennonite Church
Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago
Twenty-sixth Street Mission in Chicago, also called Mennonite Gospel Mission

Second Group, Between pages 192 *and* 193

Partridge Mennonite Church, later Metamora
Metamora Mennonite Church
Roanoke Mennonite Church
Pleasant Grove Mennonite Church near Tremont
Willow Springs Mennonite Church near Tiskilwa
Hopedale Mennonite Church
Waldo Mennonite Church near Flanagan
East Bend Mennonite Church near Fisher
Mennonite Gospel Mission in Peoria
Mennonite Home for the Aged near Eureka

INDEXES

INDEX OF NAMES

A

Ackerman, Christian, 89
Ackerman, Daniel, 359
Ackerman, John, 359
Ackerman, Joseph, 236
Ackerman, Lena, 360
Albrecht, 80, 343
Albrecht, Alma, 302
Albrecht, Christian, 89, 223
Albrecht, Daniel, 230
Albrecht, Elizabeth, 230
Albrecht, Henry, 232, 233, 234
Albrecht, H. V., 295, 599
Albrecht, Jacob, 223, 236, 598
Albrecht, John, 184
Albrecht, Joseph, 185, 222, 231
Albrecht, Lena I., 302
Albro, A. F., 434
Alderfer, 152
Allebaugh, Joseph, 152, 160
Allgyer, Barbara (Yoder), 302
Allgyer, S. E., 294, 308
Althaus, 93, 134
Ames, William, 25
Amman, Jacob, 33, 58, 560
Amstutz, Hiram, 434
Anderson, 284
Anderson, Margaret, 287
Anderson, O., 383, 386
Anderson, Sarah, 386
Annaker, Anna (Eash), 283
Appel, 296
Appel, Lewis, 171, 172
Auer, Jacob, 79, 357, 595
Auer, John, 86
Auer, Joseph, 88
Augsburger, Christian, 597
Augspurger, 343
Augspurger, Aaron, 453, 472, 480, 485, 486, 487, 488, 494, 506, 508, 509
Augspurger, Anna, 520, 521, 534
Augspurger, Daniel, 247
Augspurger, David, 469
Augspurger, D. D., 464, 474, 477, 486, 522
Augspurger, Eugene, 487
Augspurger, Jacob, 78, 445
Augspurger, Joseph, 476, 485
Augspurger, Noah, 184, 237, 238, 239
Augspurger, Peter, 478
Augstein, Andreas, 184
Augustin, Daniel, 413, 470, 500

B

Bachman, 80, 175, 198, 219, 220, 438
Bachman, Andrew, 89, 199, 599
Bachman, Henry, 232, 233, 234
Bachman, John, 107
Bachman, John G., 174
Bachman, Joseph, 185, 195, 600
Bachman, Phoebe, 290, 313
Baecher, Joseph, 254, 466, 600
Baechler, Simon, 466, 467, 468
Baer, 134, 167, 284, 564
Baer, Christian, 90
Baer, Henry, 135, 168
Baer, J. B., 577
Baer, Jacob, 90, 96, 574
Baer, Johannes, 91, 94
Baily, Henry, 171
Balley, Joe, 93
Bally, 134
Bally, Jost, 89, 115, 135, 136, 169, 600
Barclay, Robert, 25, 26
Barge, Whitmer, 155
Barkman, J. P., 350, 382, 384, 387
Barkman, Mrs. J. P., 382
Baughman, S. E., 413
Baum, 296
Bauman, Norman, 302
Baumann, B. B., 584
Baumann, S. B., 584
Baumgartner, Christian, 34, 35
Beachy, D. J., 541
Beachy, Joel, 539
Beachy, Noah S., 551
Beachy, S. D., 541
Beachy, S. N., 541
Bechler, 343
Bechler, Christian, 597
Bechler, Simon, 239
Bechtel, Andrew S., 479, 510, 577
Beck, Peter, 79, 86, 88, 357, 595
Becker, 388
Becker, Aaron, 335
Becker, Alvin, 421
Becker, Emanuel, 339
Behr, 283
Beidler, William H., 142
Beiler, 564
Beiler, D. K., 551
Beiler, Solomon, 182
Beller, 343
Beller, Andrew, 468
Beller, John, 247
Beller, Lena, 291
Beller, Peter, 91, 199, 600
Belsley, 80
Belsley, "Black" Joe, 79, 88
Belsley, Joseph, 198, 199, 595
Belsley, Michael, 89
Belsley, Peter, 203
Belsley, "Red" Joe, 79, 88
Bender, D. H., 114
Bender, G. L., 128, 291
Bender, Samuel, 551
Bergdolt, 574
Berger, 574
Berkey, E. J., 128, 278, 285, 289
Berkey, Mary Rhodes, 289
Bernhard, 90
Bertolet, 30
Bertolet, Henry, 260
Bertsche, Amelia, 388
Bertsche, Harry, 339

Betzley, Joseph, 185
Birkey, 78, 343
Birkey, Andrew, 239, 253, 321, 359
Birkey, Benjamin, 359, 360, 370
Birkey, Chris Ben, 339
Birkey, Christian, 88
Birkey, Edna, 362, 388, 389
Birkey, Joseph, 203, 238
Birkey, Levi E., 256
Birkey, N., 196
Birkey, Valentine, 470, 485
Birky, Andrew, 219, 254, 257
Birky, Barbara, 243
Birky, C. I., 434
Birky, J., 239
Birky, J. C., 191, 196, 219, 239, 434
Birky, J. W., 434
Birky, Jacob, 240
Birky, Joseph, 239
Birky, S. D., 434
Bixel, Lester, 388
Bixler, J. K., 308
Blaurock, George, 5
Blosser, Abram, 169
Blosser, Barbara (Steiner), 290
Blosser, Kate (Hilty), 290, 293, 302
Blosser, N. D., 170
Blosser, Perry, 328
Boehm, Martin, 45
Boehr, P. J., 577
Bohn, Ernest, 480, 487, 513, 529
Bontrager, Mrs. Gertrude, 291
Bontrager, J. P., 328
Bontrager, Joseph H., 290, 557
Borntreger, Christian, 550
Borntreger, Eli, 550
Bouwens, Leonhard, 10, 11
Brandt, 574
Brenneman, 77, 80, 96, 152, 226, 459
Brenneman, Albert, 476
Brenneman, A. I., 476
Brenneman, C. B., 170
Brenneman, C. K., 140, 302
Brenneman, Daniel, 50, 51, 58, 184, 264
Brenneman, E. C., 476
Brenneman, George, 264
Brenneman, Joe P., 551
Brenneman, John M., 109, 110, 115, 174, 260, 264, 270
Brenneman, Lovina Engel, 290
Brenneman, M. E., 328
Brenneman, William, 300
Brenneman, William J., 302
Bressler, J. F., 290
Bressler, Mrs. J. F., 290
Brickler, John, 596
Briggs, Miss, 388
Broad, Henry, 395
Brownfield, 135
Brubacker, Etta, 302
Brubacker, John, 142, 143, 148, 149
Brubaker, Benjamin, 91, 93, 134
Brubaker, John, 90, 97
Brubaker, Rudolph, 142, 143
Brubaker, W. H., 128, 145
Brubaker, William, 306
Brundage, Daniel, 113
Brunk, 132
Brunk, Daniel, 290
Brunk, George R., 156
Buchanan, Roy, 291
Buckwalter, 175
Buckwalter, Ruth, 290
Buhler, 564
Burckey, Christian, 88
Burckey, Daniel, 88
Burckey, Frederick, 88
Burckey, John, 89
Burkey, 80, 462
Burkey, Andreas, 184
Burkey, Andrew, 90, 225
Burkey, Christ, 90
Burkey, Jacob, 90, 226, 231
Burkey, John, 223
Burkey, Joseph, 80, 90, 184, 228, 229, 232
Burkey, Valentine, 90
Burkhart, Abram, 128, 159, 601
Burkhart, Hettie B., 155, 157
Burkholder, David, 114
Burkholder, Seth, 163
Buzzard, A. L., 114, 136, 141, 145, 311, 328, 600
Buzzard, Mrs. A. L., 248
Byers, 152
Byers, N. E., 128, 161, 279, 289, 302, 308, 331, 530, 531, 535
Byler, Joseph, 190

C

Camp, 80, 198
Camp, Christian, 139, 199
Camp, Joseph, 139
Campbell, A. D., 381
Campbell, Minnie, 313
Chamber, 296
Chrisman, Jacob, 470
Christophel, Eli, 307
Christophel, Elias, 169, 171
Christophel, J. M., 115, 136
Christophel, Samuel, 290
Cikanek, Mary, 283, 291
Clark, 438
Clark, Joseph, 456
Claudon, 343
Claudon, Christian, 466
Claudon, D. H., 426
Claudon, D. N., 342, 345, 346, 349, 350, 354, 355, 367, 369, 371, 372, 373, 393, 395, 398, 400, 412, 413, 418, 625
Claudon, Joseph, 365, 367, 597
Claudon, J. H., 349
Clauser, A. N., 434
Coffman, Ella Mann, 289
Coffman, J. S., 114, 119, 128, 137, 144, 147, 156, 160, 168, 170, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 272, 273, 325, 601
Coffman, S. F., 156, 172, 277, 282, 283, 289, 307
Collins, Jefferson, 470
Collins, Laura, 379, 382
Conrad, John D., 155, 292, 306, 307, 309
Cooprider, Florence, 300
Cosler, Henry, 540, 541
Cosler, Ike, 540
Cressman, Mrs. M. C., 317
Culp, Lewis, 175
Dahlgren, 283, 284

D

Danner, Christian, 91
Danner, Jacob, 89, 595
Danner, Peter, 86, 89
Dellenback, Jacob, 247
Dellenback, Lena, 207
Delp, 564
Denck, Hans, 7
Denlinger, Mary, 279, 289
Denner, 77
Derstine, C. F., 156, 206, 248, 311, 321, 398
Derstine, Mrs. C. F., 321
Deter, Daniel H., 164, 165, 166, 602
Deter, Ezra, 165
Deter, Michael, 565, 635
Detsh, John, 347, 359
De Turk, 30
Detweiler, 438, 473
Detweiler, Abraham, 152, 154, 160
Detweiler, Christian, 89
Detweiler, Henry, 89, 152
Detweiler, I. R., 147, 161, 170, 173, 294, 295, 299, 308, 331, 529
Detweiler, John, 88, 91, 485
Detwiler, Christian, 575
Diebel, John, 171
Diemer, Floyd, 362
Diemer, Frank, 361, 362
Diemer, Obed A., 542
Dierberger, Peter W., 290
Diller, Alma, 388
Diller, Jacob, 142
Dodge, Rev. Joseph, 73
Doering (Missionary), 370
Doering, Alma E., 369, 370, 378, 388, 389
Donner, 96, 459
Donner, Peter Sr., 96, 459
Dowie, John Alexander, 60
Drange, 283
Drange, Edward, 172
Driver, 132
Driver, D. F., 114
Driver, Joe C., 329
Duerrstein, John, 94

E

Eash, A. M., 114, 258, 290, 292, 293, 295, 299, 300, 301, 302, 307, 308, 487, 512, 524, 525, 632
Eash, Mrs. A. M., 293, 300, 302, 319
Eash, C. H., 300
Eash, Phoebe, 243
Ebersole, Mrs. Abraham, 154
Ebersole, Abraham D., 128, 160
Ebersole, Amos, 156
Ebersole, Andrew, 199
Ebersole, Barbara, 155
Ebersole, Benjamin, 154
Ebersole, Christian R., 153
Ebersole, Daniel, 158, 159
Ebersole, David L., 148, 149
Ebersole, Elizabeth Hershberger, 289
Ebersole, Eli, 154
Ebersole, Esther (Lapp), 290
Ebersole, Henry R., 152, 155
Ebersole, Jacob, 154
Ebersole, Mrs. Jacob, 154
Ebersole, John, 153
Ebersole, Lizzie, 155
Ebersole, Melinda, 128, 161, 277, 278, 289, 319, 331, 602
Ebersole, Michael, 155
Ebersole, Dr. S. D., 161, 273, 276, 277, 285, 289
Eby, Abram, 283
Eby, Amanda, 281, 290
Eby, Clara (Steiner), 277, 289
Eby, Isaac, 115
Eby, Matthias, 113, 115, 117, 142, 144, 148, 149
Egle, 343
Egle, C. R., 339, 342, 344, 345, 346, 347, 350, 354, 365, 367, 369, 373, 417, 418, 625
Egle, Fanny, 344
Egle, George, 349, 355
Egle, William, 354
Egli, Aaron, 475, 477, 478, 493
Egli, J., 239
Egli, John, 238
Egli, Joseph, 239
Egly, Abraham, 336
Egly, Christian, 336
Egly, C. G., 347
Egly, Henry, 37, 38, 58, 334, 336, 337, 338, 343, 344, 347, 358, 365, 367
Egly, Henry, Jr., 336
Egly, Jacob, 336
Egly, Joseph, 336, 347
Egly, Kathryn, 336
Egly, Magdalena, 336
Egly, Samuel, 336
Ehresman, 597
Ehresman, Dorothy, 362
Ehresman, J. E., 346
Ehresman, John, 342, 344, 597
Ehresman, Peter, 345
Ehresman, P. P., 345, 369
Ehresman, Sam, 339
Ehrisman, 211
Ehrisman, Christ, 90
Eigsti, 343
Eigsti, C. C., 559
Eigsti, Christian, 217, 551
Eigsti, Ira, 230, 603
Eigsti, Jacob, 224
Eigsti, John, 234
Eigsti, Mrs. John, 234
Engel, Christian, 79, 81, 88, 92, 135, 136, 198, 199, 596, 604
Engel, Elvina, 140
Engel, Jacob, 44, 58
Engel, Joe, 88, 199
Engel, John, 198, 199, 595, 596
Engel, Joseph, 604
Engel, Luella, 523
Engle, Peter, 79, 86, 87, 88, 101
Engle, 462
Engle, Jacob, 468
Engle, John, 79, 88
Engel, Peter, 79, 86, 87, 88, 101
Erb, John, 85
Esch, 80
Esch, Benjamin F., 465, 487, 488, 510, 529, 531, 535
Esch, Christian, 89, 199, 604
Esch, Dr. C. D., 200, 300, 302
Esch, Mrs. C. D., 300, 302
Estherly, Mrs. (Egle), 345

F

Fahrney, 101
Fahrni, 30
Farney, 343
Farni, 597
Farni, Christian, 85, 87, 88, 596, 597
Farni, Peter, 79, 88, 597
Fast, Rev. M. B., 592
Fisher, Hattie V., 290
Fleiser, C. D., 214
Fleiser, C. W., 214
Fliginger, J. J., 434
Folkers, C. B., 349
Forney, 211
Fortner, John V., 148, 149, 307, 604
Fortner, Mrs. J. V., 147
Fox, George, 24, 25, 26
Frake, Earl, 339
Frank, 296
Frey, 152
Frey, Abraham, 157
Frey, E. L., 191
Fricke, 284
Froehlick, Samuel, 34, 35, 58
Funk, 132
Funk, Christian, 45, 46, 58, 598
Funk, Bishop Heinrick, 45
Funk, Heinrich, 598
Funk, John F., 12, 107, 108, 109, 110, 114, 115, 128, 169, 174, 176, 177, 190, 233, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 270, 271, 272, 277, 278, 281, 283, 461, 499, 553, 555, 557, 605

G

Gallentine, Joseph, 163
Garber, 80, 438, 462
Garber, Christ, 90, 91
Garber, C. J., 328
Garber, Daniel, 190, 191
Garber, Jacob, 320, 321, 322
Garber, Joe, 89, 90
Garber, Leonard, 171
Garber, Peter, 90, 91, 190, 199, 466
Garber, Peter Samuel, 606
Garber, P. N., 485
Gasche, 343
Gascho, Joseph, 248
Geigley, A. W., 299, 302
Gerber, 198
Gerber, Chris, 339
Gerber, Christ, 184
Gerber, Joseph, 440
Gerber, Samuel, 34, 35, 114, 190, 191, 196, 219, 293, 295, 311, 328, 329, 607
Gerig, Benjamin, 190
Gerig, Christian, 345, 354
Gerig, C. R., 190, 196, 328
Gerig, David, 345
Gerig, Ezra, 355
Gerig, Joseph M., 345, 354, 372
Gerig, Joseph, 342
Gerig, J. K., 339, 347, 369, 370, 371, 374, 376, 421, 426, 626
Gerig, Mrs. J. K., 370
Gerig, Mrs. J. S., 317
Gerig, S., 190, 191
Gertman, 284
Gingerich, 77, 86, 96, 438, 459
Gingerich, Christian, 460
Gingerich, Fred, 191, 196, 328
Gingerich, George, 254
Gingerich, John, 89, 199, 413, 460, 476, 477, 485, 486, 487, 493
Gingerich, Mrs. John, 234
Gingerich, J. C., 328
Gingerich, Peter, 199, 464, 607
Gingerich, S., 191, 196
Gingerich, Simon, 307, 328
Gingerys, 223
Gingrich, John, 607
Ginkinger, Charles L., 564
Goertz, David, 576
Goldschmidt, Catherine, 336
Goldschmidt, Joseph, 86
Good, A. C., 158, 161, 170, 248, 290, 293, 295, 307, 308, 311, 314, 328, 329, 607
Good, Christian, 161
Good, Dr. Dewitt, 276, 285, 289
Good, Mamie (Neff), 291
Good, Mary, 243
Good, Nora, 158
Good, Samuel, 161
Good, S. R., 155, 160, 306, 307, 308, 309, 314, 608
Goodman, Dorothy, 373
Graber, Daniel, 190
Grabill, Anna, 302
Grabill, S. J., 434
Grange, 284
Graybill, 167
Graybill, Joseph, 101
Graybill, John, 89
Graybill, Noah, 170, 171
Graybill, Samuel, 107, 167
Graybill, Simon E., 147, 149, 608
Grebel, Conrad, 5, 6
Greenawalt, Lulu (Reist), 290
Greiner, Elmer, 362
Greiner, Frederick, 362
Greiser, Daniel, 239
Gresser, John, 289
Greubler, 574
Grey, Walter, 234
Grieser, George, 320
Griser, Daniel, 254
Groff, Godfrey, 90, 97, 142
Groff, Hattie, 155, 156
Grubb, W. H., 479, 487, 510
Gsell, 163
Gsell, John, 162, 164
Gsell, Joseph, 163
Gsell, William, 107, 162
Gundy, George, 398, 415, 416, 493
Gundy, G. I., 469, 473, 474, 487, 511, 512, 513
Gustafson, Theresa, 388
Guth, 80, 462
Guth, Peter, 79, 88, 184, 358

H

Haetzer, Ludwig, 7
Hagey, George, 564, 565
Haigh, L. B., 373, 379, 380, 381, 384, 385, 386, 460, 509, 510
Haigh, Mrs. L. B., 379, 380, 384, 385
Hamilton, Benjamin F., 168
Haring, Dr. T., 598
Harms, John, 347

Harnish, J. L., 309, 310, 311, 313, 609
Harnish, Viola, 313
Harshbarger, Abe, 107
Harshbarger, Samuel, 107
Harshberger, 167
Hartman, E. M., 114, 115, 121, 122, 128, 136, 141, 159, 168, 169, 200, 609
Hartman, Henry, 136, 138
Hartman, Ida, 139
Hartman, Peter, 89, 93, 134
Hartzler, Chancey A., 191, 196, 203, 308, 328, 329, 610
Hartzler, C. K., 291
Hartzler, J. D., 398, 610
Hartzler, J. E., 137, 155, 158, 328, 465, 513, 529
Hartzler, J. S., 114, 191
Hartzler, L. D., 522
Hartzler, Mrs. L. D., 505
Hartzler, Lee, 479
Hartzler, Levi, 290
Hartzler, Raymond, 484, 529
Hartzler, Simon, 139
Harvey, 284
Hass, John, 434
Hauder, Joseph, 207
Haun, 175
Haun, Peter, 169
Haury, S. S., 577
Hauter, C., 128
Heatwole, J. A., 328, 329
Heckelman, John, 107
Heckleman, 167
Heckler, Henry, 152, 154
Heckler, Jacob, 107, 152
Heer, 574
Heer, David, 95
Heer, Jacob, 94
Hege, Rev. Daniel, 575, 576, 577, 584, 636
Heiser, Andrew, 253
Heiser, C. D., 308
Heiser, J. A., 169, 255, 256, 308, 314
Heiser, Jacob, 253
Heiser, Joe, 91
Heiser, Joseph A., 254, 610
Heimuth, Albert, 547
Hendricks, 564
Hendricks, John, 107, 152, 154
Hendricks, Leonard, 152, 166
Herner, 167
Herner, Benjamin, 114, 123, 128, 171, 293, 611
Herr, Amos, 260, 264
Herr, Francis, 46, 58, 561
Herr, John, 46, 561
Herr, Walter, 371, 382
Hershberger, C. P., 541
Hershey, Benjamin, 113, 115, 152, 154, 160, 162, 163
Hershey, Fannie (Lapp), 290
Hess, 152
Hess, Elmer D., 290, 302
Hess, Mrs. Elmer D., 290, 302
Hess, J. W., 156, 170, 311
Hess, M. R., 155
Hildy, 343
Hildy, John, 349
Hilty, J. W., 462
Hirschler, 574
Hirschler, Daniel, 577
Hirstein, 93, 134, 136, 574
Hirstein, Aaron, 173
Hirstein, Amelia (Grove), 290
Hirstein, Lena, 171
Hirstein, Martha, 171
Hoch, Daniel, 584
Hochstettler, Daniel, 360
Hochstettler, Jacob, 360
Hochstettler, J. B., 361, 362
Hochstettler, Peter, 358, 359, 360, 365, 367, 369, 417, 627
Hodel, Henry, 597
Hofer, D. M., 591, 592
Hofer, Mrs. D. M., 591
Hoffman, 296
Hoffman, Lydia (Stahl), 302
Holdeman, John, 49, 58, 61
Hollenback, Dr., 392
Holly, 226
Honderich, S., 114, 168, 171, 173
Hooley, 77, 80
Hoover, Benjamin, 565
Hoover, John, 564, 565
Horlacher, Godfrey, 565
Horst, Elizabeth, 302
Hostetler, Adam, 551
Hostetler, Christ, 91
Hostetler, Christian, 91
Hostetler, C. K., 291
Hostetler, Cornelius, 540
Hostetler, Ernest, 477, 487
Hostetler, Jacob, 91, 184, 217
Hostetler, Joe, 91, 184, 239
Hostetler, Jonathan, 540
Hostetler, Levi, 551
Hostetler, Peter, 91, 218
Hostetler, S. Jay, 169, 314, 316
Hostetler, Mrs. S. Jay, 316
Hubmaier, Balthasar, 7
Huffman, J. A., 62, 373, 484, 532
Hulburt, C. E., 369, 378, 516
Hunsberger, Ephraim, 584
Hust, 365
Hutter, Jacob, 10, 32, 58

I

Imhoff, 77, 80, 198, 438
Imhoff, Christian, 441, 456, 464, 482, 486, 491, 492
Ingold, August, 253
Ioder, Jacob, 236
Ioder, Joseph, 89, 223, 234
Irmeger, Willis, 362
Iutzi, F. A., 476

J

Jansen, Cornelius, 20
Janzen, A., 382, 384
Janzen, Mrs. A., 382
Johns, D. J., 190, 273, 560
Johnson, Charles, 295
Johnson, Nicholas, 264
Jorg, J. D., 400
Jutzi, 77
Jutzy, Peter, 77

K

Kanagy, S. M., 282, 283, 291, 611
Kanagy, Mrs. S. M., 291

Kauffman, 77, 82, 438, 473
Kauffman, Abe, 545
Kauffman, Ben, 90, 93, 134
Kauffman, Daniel, 114, 147, 328
Kauffman, David, 551
Kauffman, E., 234
Kauffman, Edmund, 577
Kauffman, Gideon N., 541
Kauffman, Henry, 152, 153
Kauffman, Isaac N., 551
Kauffman, Jacob, 551
Kauffman, John D., 41, 58, 552, 553, 558, 559
Kauffman, John J., 559
Kauffman, Jonas J., 540, 541
Kauffman, Jonathan, 91, 485
Kauffman, L. A., 328
Kauffman, Moses, 541
Kauffman, Noah, 551
Kauffman, Samuel, 478, 479
Kauffman, William J., 551
Kaufman, J. N., 283
Kaufman, Mrs. J. N., 172, 331
Keagey, Michael, 262
Keim, Joseph N., 541
Keith, Metta, 388
Kelso, Dr., 405, 406
Kenagy, J. C., 556
Kendig, Benjamin, 134
Kennel, 77, 96, 459
Kennel, John, 79, 88, 198, 482
Kennel, Kilean, 184
Kennel, Peter, 196, 203, 328
Kennell, J. J., 487
Kennell, Joseph J., 560
Kensinger, Mrs. William G., 383
Kensinger, William G., 383, 384, 391
Kent, Frank, 468
Kindig, Benjamin, 88, 92
Kindig, David, 92
Kindig, Joseph, 135, 136
King, 284, 343, 438
King, Aaron, 349, 400
King, Anna (Hartzler), 290
King, B. B., 290
King, Christian, 90, 213, 214, 345, 365, 440
King, Dan, 90
King, Daniel R., 393
King, Mrs. Daniel R., 393
King, David, 349
King, J. H., 230
King, John P., 186
King, Joseph H., 404, 409, 456, 457, 470, 474, 480, 482, 483, 484, 486, 487, 488, 506, 516, 518, 531
King, J. P., 449
King, Michael, 90
King, Peter, 470
King, Samuel, 248, 430
Kinsinger, 77, 96, 438, 459
Kinsinger, Clara, 504
Kinsinger, C. W., 485
Kinsinger, Mrs. C. W., 505
Kinsinger, Jacob, 136
Kinsinger, John, 404, 409, 460, 461, 482, 485, 486, 487, 488
Kinsinger, Joseph, 453, 468, 469, 482, 486, 513
Kinsinger, Michael, 89, 185, 460, 464, 465, 469, 481, 482, 491
Kinzer, 434
Kirchner, George L., 470
Kissler, John M., 91
Kistler, John Michael, 459, 460
Kistler, Michael, 90, 96, 97, 105, 226, 227, 228
Klassen, J. H., 349, 354, 415
Klemmer, S. G., 584
Kliewer, J. W., 530
Klopfenstein, 211, 388, 597
Klopfenstein, Elmer, 237
Klopfenstein, Irwin, 339
Klopfenstein, John, 91, 597
Kniss, Lloy, 313
Kniss, Mrs. Lloy, 313
Kodah, 284
Koenig or King, 77
Koenig, Christian, 597
Koenig, Jacob, 597
Koenig, John, 597
Koenig, Michael, 597
Koerner, Henry, 171, 172
Koerner, Mary, 171
Koerner, Minnie, 172
Koerner, Susie V., 171, 172
Kohler, 438, 473
Kohler, John, 446, 457, 485, 488
Kohm, Matilda, 369, 377
Kolb, A. B., 128, 291
König, John, 84, 85
König, Michael, 184
Kornhaus, John, 165
Kraemer, 574
Kraemer, John, 575
Kratz, 564
Krehbiel, 574
Krehbiel, Christian, 576, 577, 584, 586, 637
Krehbiel, Daniel, 581, 584
Krehbiel, J. C., 584, 586
Krehbiel, Jacob E., 577
Kreider, Amos E., 161, 295, 612
Kreider, Mrs. Amos E., 318, 319
Kreider, Frank, 157
Kreider, J. M., 114, 328, 329
Kreider, John, 107
Kreider, John H., 152, 153, 295
Kring, Ray, 302
Kroeker, Sarah, 371, 382, 588
Kropf, Jacob D., 559
Kulp, 175
Kulp, Lewis, 175
Kurtz, J., 190
Kurtz, Jonathan, 137, 451
Kurtz, Kate, 290

L

Landes, Fannie Landis, 290
Landis, 151, 153, 564
Landis, Amos, 159
Landis, Bessie (Gerig), 290
Landis, Hans, 16
Landis, Henry, 107
Landis, Henry S., 151
Landis, William, 158
Langdon, 388
Langenmantel, Hans, 7
Lantz, 82, 438, 473, 597
Lantz, Eli, 339, 367, 370, 627
Lantz, John, 91

Lantz, Lee, 230, 453, 473, 475, 477, 478, 479, 480, 485, 486, 487, 488, 493, 501, 509, 510, 535
Lantz, Milo P., 488
Lantz, Monroe, 350, 363
Lantz, P. R., 290
Lape, E. S., 302
Lape, Nora (Mrs. E. S.), 302
Lapp, Benjamin, 152, 160
Lapp, Daniel, 156
Lapp, D. G., 114, 328
Lapp, Esther Ebersole, 161, 172, 331
Lapp, G. J., 114, 137, 161, 283, 290, 308
Lapp, Isaac, 149
Lapp, John, 115, 143
Lapp, M. C., 290, 308
Lapp, Martin, 90, 97, 142, 148
Lapp, Samuel, 90, 97, 142, 143, 144, 148, 149
Lapp, S. G., 114
Leaman, A. H., 114, 137, 170, 280, 281, 283, 290, 292, 293, 294, 295, 305, 307, 308, 524, 588, 613
Leaman, Mrs. Amanda, 318
Le Fever, Lydia (Burkhard), 302
Le Fevre, 30
Lefevre, Emma (Byers), 128
Le Fevre, Phares, 128
Lehmann, 343
Lehman, Christian, 86
Lehman, David, 169
Lehman, John, 453, 474, 486, 488
Lehman, J. S., 128, 148
Lehman, L. J., 114, 137, 156, 168, 248
Lehman, M., 584
Lehman, M. C., 290
Lehman, P. Y., 168
Lehner, 284
Leidig, Henry, 165
Leightner, B. F., 433
Leip, S., 365
Leiser, William, 471
Leisey, Jacob, 91, 96
Leisy, Jacob, 577, 584
Litwiller, 80, 198, 343
Litwiller, Ada (Mrs. Nelson), 302
Litwiller, Benjamin, 240
Litwiller, C., 345
Litwiller, Christian, 355
Litwiller, Jacob, 476
Litwiller, Joe, 90, 219, 237, 239
Litwiller, Jonas, 614
Litwiller, J. W., 349, 400, 477, 487, 493
Litwiller, N. J., 300, 302
Litwiller, Peter, 90
Litwiller, Samuel, 345
Litwiller, Simon, 239, 240, 614
Loerner, Reuben, 171
Long, C. Warren, 314
Loucks, Aaron, 172, 289
Lugibill, Addelle. 370, 371, 421
Lukert, John, 597
Luther, 5, 6, 23

M

Mach, Alexander, 27, 28
Magnuson, Carl, 234, 316
Magnuson, Mrs. Carl, 316
Mann, Melinda (King), 290
Mannhardt, Emil, 595, 596, 597, 598
Mannhardt, Jacob, 598
Manz, Felix, 5, 6
Marbeck, Pilgram, 7, 10
Marison, 284
Martin, 152
Martin, Benjamin, 240
Martin, C. E., 240, 309
Martin, Christian, 91, 237
Martin, Nicholas, 238
Martin, Samuel, 154
Martin, Solomon, 154
Mast, 77
Mast, A. J., 542
Mast, D. J., 542
Mast, H. J., 541
Mast, I. S., 328
Mast, M. A., 190
Matthys, Jan, 10
Maurer, 438
Maurer, Benjamin, 474
Maurer, Joseph, 614
Maurer, Nicholas, 77, 78, 87, 595, 597
Maurer, Peter, 77, 78, 87, 595
Maurer, S. E., 516
Maurer, Mrs. S. E., 505
Meck, A. J., 145
Meck, Clarence, 145
Mehl, J. C., 453
Melanchthon, 23
Mellinger, Benjamin, 160, 615
Mellinger, Levi, 339
Menke, 344
Metzler, Noah, 280, 289
Meyers, Christian, 483
Meyers, John, 470
Miller, Allen, 230, 404, 409, 453, 486, 488, 506, 513, 518, 520, 534
Miller, A. C., 551
Miller, A. J., 542
Miller, Allen H., 47, 487, 493
Miller, Benjamin, 551
Miller, Christian, 470, 597
Miller, Daniel, 106, 539
Miller, D. D., 128, 137, 156, 170, 173, 190, 248, 273, 560
Miller, Earl, 309, 313, 314, 615
Miller, Mrs. Earl, 313
Miller, Edna, 302
Miller, Henry, 234
Miller, Isaac, 541
Miller, Jacob, 77, 91, 185, 440, 441, 456, 492, 550
Miller, Joel, 540
Miller, John, 360, 542, 551
Miller, John A., 551
Miller, Levi, 183, 329
Miller, L. A., 550
Miller, L. H., 328
Miller, L. J., 147, 191, 196
Miller, Michael, 440, 441, 456, 492
Miller, Moses B., 448
Miller, Silas, 370
Miller, S. J., 371
Miller, Uriah, 551
Miller, William, 565, 566, 636
Miller, W. W., 587
Miller, Mrs. W. W., 587

Millhouse, Jacob, 152
Mishler, Jacob, 551
Mishler, Lucy (Grabill), 302
Mitchell, Amos, 434
Mitchell, Franklin, 477, 487, 513
Mohler, John P., 486
Mohr, Mrs. Anna, 470
Morrison, Dr., 380
Moseman, Joseph, 364, 395
Moseman, Michael, 80, 81, 88, 184, 185, 338, 358, 364
Moser, H. H., 388, 389
Moser, Mrs. H. H., 388, 389
Moser, Samuel, 104
Mosiman, Dr. S. K., 530, 531
Mourer, Joseph, 199
Moyer, A. O., 584
Moyer, John, 152
Moyer, L. S., 584
Moyer, Mary, 302
Mueller, 597
Münzer, Thomas, 9
Musselman, Amanda, 290
Musselman, David, 224
Musselman, Henry, 90, 94
Musselman, Michael, 95
Musselman, Samuel, 579
Musser, Daniel, 561, 562
Myers, Abraham, 152
Myers, H. R., 294

Mc

Mc Connell, Jeffrey, 142
Mc Culloh, John, 128, 306
Mc Culloh, John W., 165, 168, 173
Mc Culloh, J. W., 307
Mc Culloh, Sarah, 171
Mc Millan, 388
Mc Pherson, J. E., 564
Mc Quirter, 284

N

Naffziger, 80, 438, 473
Naffziger, Albert, 476, 479
Naffziger, A. J., 476
Naffziger, C. Z., 477
Naffziger, D. P., 476
Naffziger, John, 199, 596, 615
Naffziger, Peter, 459
Naffziger, Peter D., 481
Nafsinger, 459
Nafziger, 96, 223, 343
Nafziger, Andrew, 240
Nafziger, Christian, 88, 89, 90, 106, 184, 237, 238
Nafziger, Daniel, 239, 464, 616
Nafziger, Henry, 90
Nafziger, J., 237, 239, 240
Nafziger, Jacob, 89, 185
Nafziger, Johann, 184
Nafziger, John, 89, 238
Nafziger, Mrs. Kathryn, 243
Nafziger, Peter, 78, 86, 88, 89, 96, 487
Nafziger, Solomon, 472
Nafzinger, 226
Nauhein, 225
Neff, Peter, 108, 176, 177, 270
Neisz, Jonas, 584
Neuenschwander, Albert, 426
Neuenschwander, Peter, 94
Neuffer, 284
Neuhauser, 597
Neuhauser, Amos, 322, 426
Neuhauser, Valentine, 184, 597
Nice, 152
Nice, Abner A., 164
Nice, Annie (Ruth), 128
Nice, Henry, 113, 115, 128, 136, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 169, 616
Nice, Henry Jr., 164, 166
Nice, John, 114, 115, 123, 128, 136, 165, 166, 168, 169, 281, 306, 329, 616
Nice, Philip, 114, 128, 155, 159, 161
Nice, William, 307
Nice, William G., 164
Niergarth, Fritz, 87
Niergarth, Wm., 597
Nissley, Abe, 551
Nissley, Rev. Peter, 109, 260
Niswander, Miss Cassie, 587
Nofsinger, 77
Nofsinger, John, 460
Nofsinger, Martha, 310, 313
Nofzinger, 462
Norquist, Carl, 434
Nunemaker, Edward, 156
Nunemaker, H. E., 460, 487, 510, 513, 529
Nunemaker, John, 154

O

Obelhauer, 296
Oberholtzer, John H., 47, 48, 58, 578, 579, 580, 581, 584
Oberholzer, Abraham, 578
Oesch, Andrew, 229, 232, 233, 234, 453, 486
Older, Edwin, 234
Orendorf, 173, 237
Otto, 96, 438, 459
Otto, Albert, 470
Otto, Daniel, 106, 540
Otto, Daniel M., 542
Otto, D. J., 470
Otto, Eli Y., 541
Otto, Heinrich, 597
Otto, Samuel, 470
Oyer, 80, 198, 246, 343
Oyer, Amos, 290, 359, 370, 371, 373, 378, 418, 419, 421
Oyer, Benjamin, 339
Oyer, Christian, 359
Oyer, Edward H., 199, 309, 617
Oyer, Eli J., 339, 345, 354
Oyer, Emma, 285, 290
Oyer, J. A., 369
Oyer, Jacob, 214
Oyer, Joseph, 345
Oyer, Julia, 354, 370, 371, 378
Oyer, P. P., 345
Orendorf, 343
Orendorff, Ada, 313, 319
Orendorff, Jacob, 321, 466

P

Page, Dr. W. B., 276, 285, 289
Page, Mrs. W. B., 505
Parret, 132
Patton, Edna, 520, 521

Yoder, Abner, 448, 449
Yoder, Abner G., 191, 196
Yoder, Allen, 487, 488, 513
Yoder, A. G., 329
Yoder, A. I., 280, 284, 289, 308
Yoder, C. D., 328, 329
Yoder, C. Z., 190
Yoder, D. A., 170, 173
Yoder, D. C., 190
Yoder, D. M., 540
Yoder, D. S., 291
Yoder, Elias, 91, 442
Yoder, Henry, 542
Yoder, Herman, 291
Yoder, Ida, 291, 322
Yoder, Iddo, 442
Yoder, Jacob, 182, 551
Yoder, Jerry, 540
Yoder, Joe, 91, 540
Yoder, Jonathan, 82, 91, 104, 105, 183, 184, 186, 203, 439, 440, 446, 454, 462, 463, 519, 536, 633
Yoder, Joseph, 448, 451, 452
Yoder, Jost, 91
Yoder, J. K., 186, 190, 344, 449
Yoder, Mary (Burkhard), 290
Yoder, Mose, 539, 540
Yoder, Moses, 106
Yoder, Moses J., 551
Yoder, Ruth, 317
Yoder, Samuel, 91, 175, 448
Yoder, Samuel C., 191
Yoder, Sanford C., 191, 248, 320, 321, 328
Yoder, S. E., 558
Yoder, Solomon, 213
Yoder, Walter, 138, 139
Yordy, 80, 343
Yordy, Alma (Eigsti), 313
Yordy, Anna, 291
Yordy, Christian, 203
Yordy, Ezra, 206, 308, 311, 316, 623
Yorte, Christ, 90
Yorte, Peter, 89
Yother, 152
Yother, Henry, 115, 160
Yotty, Christian, 207
Young, 296

Z

Zehr, 80, 85, 152, 211, 343, 438
Zehr, Bishop, 256
Zehr, Christ, 90
Zehr, Christian, 597
Zehr, Daniel, 90, 213, 623
Zehr, D. D., 255
Zehr, George, 91, 237, 597
Zehr, Jacob, 91, 184, 205, 212, 213, 446, 597, 624
Zehr, Joseph, 212, 247, 452, 467, 469, 485, 486, 487
Zehr, Levi, 339, 373
Zehr, Peter, 213, 214, 253, 254, 597
Zehr, Reuben, 470, 473, 487, 513
Zehr, Samuel S., 254, 255, 624
Zendt, H. M., 565
Zentner, Joseph, 203, 206
Zierlein, 223
Zierlein, Elizabeth, 227
Zierlein, Fred, 224
Zimmerman, 83, 343
Zimmerman, Andreas, 185, 228
Zimmerman, Andrew, 236
Zimmerman, Anna, 370, 371, 378
Zimmerman, A. C., 345, 346, 354
Zimmerman, August, 351
Zimmerman, Christian, 365
Zimmerman, C. R., 400
Zimmerman, David, 373, 631
Zimmerman, D. K., 370
Zimmerman, D. M., 372
Zimmerman, D. N., 339
Zimmerman, Enoch, 361, 362
Zimmerman, E. E., 349, 361, 362, 376
Zimmerman, I. J., 328
Zimmerman, Joseph, 196, 329
Zimmerman, J. E., 328
Zimmerman, J. H., 349
Zimmerman, L. C., 346
Zimmerman, Peter, 205, 206, 207, 558, 559, 560
Zook, 77
Zook, A. R., 291
Zook, Bertha (Detweiler), 290
Zook, Frances (Oyer), 290
Zook, Jacob H., 91
Zook, John, 273
Zook, John R., 558, 559
Zook, Lina (Ressler), 290
Zook, Lydia, 302
Zook, Shem, 186
Zuck, 84
Zug, 76
Zurich, 4, 5
Zwingli, 4, 5, 6, 22

INDEX OF BIOGRAPHIES

Henry Val. Albrecht (1860-), 599
Andrew Bachman (-1864), 599
Joseph Bachman (1826-1897), 600
Joseph Baecher (1853-1931), 600
Jost Bally (1795-1878), 600
Peter Beller (1800-1887), 600
Abram Burkhart (1857-), 601
Alphaeus L. Buzzard (1870-), 601
David N. Claudon (1867-), 625
John S. Coffman (1848-1899), 601
Daniel Deter (1852-), 602
Michael Deter (1857-), 635
Amos M. Eash (1882-), 632
Melinda Ebersole (1880-), 602
Christian R. Egle (1858-1926), 625
Ira H. Eigsti (1895-), 603
Christian Engel (-1838), 604
Joseph Engel (-1852), 604
Christian Esch (1818-1882), 604
John V. Fortner (1854-), 604
John Fretz Funk (1835-1930), 605
Samuel Garber (1849-), 606
Samuel Gerber (1863-1929), 607
Joseph K. Gerig (1868-), 626
Peter Gingerich (-), 607
John Gingrich (-1845), 607
Aaron C. Good (1881-), 607
Solomon R. Good (1871-), 608
Simon E. Graybill (1873-), 608
John L. Harnish (1896-), 609
Eman. M. Hartman (1849-1912), 609
Chancy A. Hartzler (1876-), 610
Joseph D. Hartzler (1884-), 610
Daniel Hege (1826-1862), 636
Joseph A. Heiser (1888-), 610
Benjamin Herner (1845-1915), 611
Peter Hochstettler (1834-1924), 627
Simon M. Kanagy (1869-), 611
Christian Krehbiel (1832-), 637
Amos Ebersole Kreider (1889-), 612
Eli Lantz (1859-), 627
Amos Hershey Leaman (1880-), 613
Jonas Litwiller (1865-), 614
Simon Litwiller (1880-), 614
Joseph Maurer (-1867), 614
Benjamin Mellinger (1880-), 615
Earl Miller (1900-), 615
William Miller (1847-1920), 636
Daniel Naffziger (1860-), 616
John Naffziger (1802-1856), 615
Henry Nice (1822-1892), 616
John Nice (1858-1931), 616
Edward H. Oyer (1881-), 617
David E. Plank (1884-), 617
Edward A. Rediger (1866-), 618
Joseph Rediger (1826-1904), 628
Andrew Ropp (-), 618
Benjamin Rupp (-), 404,
Elmer E. Rupp (1885-), 630
Samuel Rupp (1856-), 630
Christian S. Schertz (1851-), 618
Henry R. Schertz (1886-), 618
Peter Schertz (1848-1928), 619
Jacob Schmucker (1860-), 630
Andrew A. Schrock (1863-), 619
J. S. Shoemaker (1854-), 620
Daniel W. Slagel (1864-), 621
Emanuel Slagle (1870-), 631
Benjamin Springer (1881-), 621
Menno S. Steiner (1866-1911), 622
Jonathan Yoder (1795-1869), 633
Ezra H. Yordy (1892-), 623
Daniel Zehr (1849-), 623
Jacob Zehr (1875-), 624
Samuel Zehr (1870-), 624
David M. Zimmerman (1869-), 631

INDEX OF PLACES

Italics type indicates the name of a Mennonite congregation.

A

Adams Co., Ind., 336, 337, 629, 630
Africa, 20, 21
Alberta, 33
Allen Co., Ind., 626
Allen Co., Ohio, 174, 622
Alpha, Minn., 173
Alsace-Lorraine, 7, 16, 21, 76, 77, 79, 80, 175, 198, 203, 357, 358, 445, 447, 597, 599, 600, 604, 606, 607, 614, 621, 625, 626, 627, 630
Anchor, Cent. Conf., 453, 471-472, 486, 487, 493, 499
Appenzell, 7
Archbold, Ohio, 347, 354, 419
Archbold, Ohio, Def. Menn., 339, 354, 367
Argentina, 20
Arthur Settlement, O. O. Amish 539-550
Arthur, 106, 192, 210, 239
Arthur, Ill., 192, 529, 540
Ashland Co., Ohio, 638
Ashley, Mich., 513
Augsburg, Germany, 7
Augusta Co., Va., 92, 134
Aurora, Nebr., 453, 464, 467, 474, 508, 510
Aurora, Nebr., Cent. Conf., Pleasant View, 453, 464, 474, 486, 487, 488, 493, 507, 510, 517
Austria, 7

B

Baden, 254, 336, 597, 598, 617, 625, 628, 630, 631
Basel, Switzerland, 5, 7
Bavaria, 80, 81, 93, 94, 216, 222, 232, 238, 254, 357, 597, 598, 599, 600, 627, 638
Belgium, 311
Bellefontaine, Ohio, 317
Bennett's Switch, Ind., 551
Berks Co., Pa., 633
Bern, Switzerland, 7
Berne, Ind., 365, 379, 417, 539
Berne, Ind., Def. Menn., 339, 354, 365, 367, 379, 417
Bethel, see *Pekin*
Blair Co., Pa., 132, 184, 216
Bloomington, Ill., 34, 334, 336, 380, 402, 403, 443, 487, 511, 517, 532, 595, 598
Bluffton, Ind., 426
Bluffton, Ohio, 29, 273, 275, 308, 484, 535
Bluffton, Ohio, Def. Menn., 337, 367
Bowne, Mich., 265
Boyertown, Pa., Gen. Conf., 585
Brighton Mission Chapel, Chicago, Def., Menn., 588, 589
Brownstown, Ill., 551
Bucks Co., Pa., 152, 605
Bureau Co. Ill., 80, 81, 93, 94, 96, 134, 185, 191, 222, 227, 593, 599, 603
Bureau Creek, Ill., 76, 89
Butler Co., Ohio, 77, 81, 84, 87, 96, 101, 105, 184, 216, 222, 336, 337, 358, 445, 459, 460

C

Calkins, Mont., 195
Calvary, Cent. Conf. (East Washington), 202, 452, 462-465, 473, 474, 481, 486, 487, 488, 500, 507, 513
Canada, 85, 86, 97, 142, 167, 216, 218, 270, 576, 583, 595, 611
Canton, Ohio, 277
Carlock, Cent. Conf., 457, 482-484, 487, 488, 501, 506, 507, 511, 514
Carlock, Ill., 413, 443, 457, 469, 473, 483, 485, 487, 501, 514
Cass Co., Mo., 188, 609, 610
Centralia, Mo., Def. Menn., 339, 373
Chambersburg Pa., 153
Champaign Co., Ill., 206, 213, 253
Champaign Co., Ohio, 77, 184, 593

Chenoa, Ill., 185
Chicago, Def. Menn., 339
Chicago, Ill., 27, 29, 57, 108, 133, 152, 171, 177, 246, 259, 260, 270, 273, 275, 292, 305, 341, 347, 370, 377, 378, 418, 423, 433, 508, 512, 519, 522, 524, 530, 591
Chicago Mission, Gen. Conf., 586-587
China, 20, 21
Cissna Park, New Amish, 102
Clarence Center, N. Y., 142
Clear Creek, Ill., 27
Cleveland, Ohio, 434
Clinton, Ind., 450, 451
Coles Co., Ill., 550, 593
Cologne, Germany, 12
Columbus Grove, Ill., 277, 317
Columbus, Kans., Belleview Cong., Cent. Conf., 475, 487
Comins, Mich., 461
Comins, Mich., Cent. Conf., 475, 487, 512, 513
Congerville, Cent. Conf., 416, 453, 456, 472-473, 486, 487, 488, 493, 507, 513, 532
Congerville, Ill., 226, 413, 443, 453, 456, 470, 473, 491, 493
Cook Co., Ill., 593
Crystal, Kans., 191
Cullom, Ill., 167, 266
Cullom, 107, 114, 118, 136, 147, 166, 167-173, 266, 267, 268, 316
Cumberland Co., Pa., 601
Cumming Co., Nebr., 239

D

Dakota, 20
Danvers, Ill., 29, 104, 204, 211, 437, 440, 445, 461, 466, 505, 510
Danzig, Germany, 595
Dayton, Ohio, 476
Decatur Co., Kans., 239
Decatur Co., Kans., 239
Delafield, Ill., 558
Delavan Prairie (Hopedale), 187, 191, 237, 335, 438
Dillon Creek, Ill., 76, 80, 88, 89, 90, 91, 101, 237, 438
Dillon Creek (Tremont), 80, 81, 187, 191, 358, 438
Dixon, Ill., 152
Dortrecht, Netherlands, 15, 489
Douglas Co., Ill., 196, 213, 336, 539ff, 541, 593

E

East Bend (Fisher), 191, 197, 213, 216, 239, 253-258, 329
East Fairview, Nebr., 191, 327
East Peoria, Ill., 307, 309, 359
East Swamp, Pa., Gen. Conf., 583, 585
East Union, Iowa, 191
East White Oak, Cent. Conf., 453, 456, 469-471, 476, 478, 479, 486, 487, 488, 493, 495, 500, 501, 503, 507, 516, 522, 524
Elkhart Co., Ind., 184, 450, 550, 552
Elkhart Indiana, 12, 233, 263, 271, 283, 308, 317, 349, 461, 498, 529, 553
Elkton, Mich., Def. Menn., 339
Emden, Germany, 12
England, 24, 25
Eureka, Ill., 202, 203, 205, 215, 218, 235, 295, 318, 320, 321, 413
Eureka, New Amish, 102

F

Fairburg, Ill., 468
Fairview, Neb., 190
Farnisville, Ill., 79, 443, 596, 597
Fayette Co., Colony, O. O. Amish, 551
Fayette Co., Ill., 551, 593
Filer, Idaho, 173
Fisher, Ill., 191, 213, 253, 314, 315, 329
Flanagan, Cent. Conf., 246, 355, 452, 466-467, 468, 486, 487, 488, 494, 500, 507, 508
Flanagan, Def. Menn., (Salem, near Gridley), 339
Flanagan, Ill., 105, 244, 256, 318, 321, 330, 341, 351, 355, 361, 393, 395, 452, 469, 494, 508
Forrest, New Amish, 102
France, 16, 21, 27
Franklin Prairie, Iowa, 581
Franklin Prairie, Iowa, Gen. Conf., 581
Franklin Co., Pa., 107, 167, 602, 627, 635
Freeport, Ill., 142, 294, 307, 330

Freeport, 95, 97, 114, 136, 142-150, 158, 330
Friesland, Netherlands, 11, 16
Fulton Co., Ohio, 359, 448, 630

G

Galena, Ill., 94
Garden City, Ill., 230
Garden City, Mo., 191
Gardner, 107, 174-176
Geauga Co., Ohio, 77
Geneva, Ind., 337, 347
Germantown, Pa., 18, 23, 28
Germany, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16, 19, 21, 25, 32, 48, 76, 77, 78, 176, 222, 226, 228, 232, 311, 377, 582
Girard, Ill., 29
Goodfield, 191, 197, 211, 215, 239, 254, 335, 455
Goodfield, Ill., 211, 443
Goodfield, New Amish, 102, 215
Goodland, Ind., 474
Goodland, Ind., Zion Cong., Cent. Conf., 474, 486, 487, 507, 523
Goshen, Ind., 273, 308, 318, 372, 374, 457, 501, 529
Goshen, Ind., Eighth St. Cong., Cent. Conf., 475, 487, 507, 529
Goshen, Ind., Silver St., Cong., Cent. Conf., 453, 475, 488, 493, 501, 503, 507, 514
Grabill, Ind., 426
Grabill, Ind., Def. Menn., 339, 367, 375
Grantsville, Md., 539
Granville, Ill., 226
Gridley, Ill., 185, 342, 378, 413, 431, 433, 466, 596, 597
Gridley Prairie, Ill., 244
Gridley Prairie (Waldo, Flanagan), 106, 187, 335, 342, 358, 437, 438
Gridley, New Amish, 102
Groningen, Netherlands, 11, 12
Groveland, Def. Menn., 335, 339, 357-364, 367, 433, 434
Groveland, Ind., 357, 360, 413, 433
Grundy Co., Ill., 107, 174, 593

H

Halstead, Kansas, 576
Halstead, Kans., Gen. Conf., 576
Harmony, 141, 197, 198-202, 210
Harvey Co., Kans., 639
Haven, Kans., 551
Haw Patch, Ind., 451
Hennepin, Ill., 22, 88, 89, 223, 224, 227, 236
Henry Co., Iowa, 189
Hereford, Pa., Gen. Conf., 585
Hesse, Germany, 80, 226, 238, 357, 491
Hickory Co., Mo., Def. Menn., 339
Hillsboro, Kansas, 55, 347
Holland, 11, 15, 16, 17, 25
Holland's Grove, Ill., 88, 89, 90, 91
Holmes Co., Ohio, 106, 183, 184, 550, 610, 615, 632
Home Mission, Chicago, 114, 121, 123, 140, 141, 161, 194, 270, 275-291, 302-305, 316, 318, 322, 325, 331, 424
Hoopeston, 27
Hopedale, Boynton Cong., Cent. Conf., 412, 475-478, 487, 488, 493, 513
Hopedale, 106, 190, 191, 197, 216, 237-243, 309, 329, 335, 403, 477
Hopedale, Ill., 91, 329, 359, 403, 413, 466, 475, 476, 493, 534
Hudson, Ill., 204, 469
Hungary, 33
Huntingdon, Pa., 29

I

Illinois, 3, 19, 29, 30, 34, 37, 41, 45, 51, 61, 67, 68, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 92, 93, 102, 131, 133, 183
Illinois River, 199, 216, 222, 223, 257, 445
India, 20, 21, 44, 300
Indiana, 19, 37, 61, 183
Iowa, 19, 39, 96, 183, 311
Isaac Peters Churches, Neb., Def. Menn., 588

J

Jo Daviess Co., 94, 593
Johnson Co., Ia., 106
Johnstown, Pa., 313
Juniata Co., Pa., 142, 149, 439, 608, 611, 633

K

Kalona, Iowa, 320
Kansas, 19, 20, 49, 54, 56, 148, 359
Kansas City Mission, 283
Kansas City, Mo., 193
Kentucky, 311
Kouts, Ind., 493
Kouts, Ind., Cent. Conf., 408, 475, 487, 493, 499, 507
Kickapoo Creek, Ill., 217
Kishacoquillas Valley, Pa., 182
Kitchener, Ont., 317
Knoxville, Tenn., 171

L

Lacon, Ill., 223
Lafayette, Ind., Def. Menn., 339
Lagrange Co., Ind., 77, 184, 448, 550
Lagrange, Ind., 450, 451
Lancaster Co., Pa., 84, 92, 93, 134, 142, 148, 152, 208, 358, 600, 602, 612, 613, 615, 636
Lancaster, Pa., 29
Lancaster, Pa., Mission, 283
Lawrence Co., Pa., 558
Lebanon, Co., Pa., 152, 159
Lee Co., Iowa, 574, 582, 638
Lewis Co., N. Y., 101
Lima, Ohio, 314
Lincoln County, Ont., Can., Gen. Conf., 584
Linn Ch., Roanoke, Slp. Prch. Group, 205, 559, 560
Linn Grove, Ind., 347
Livingston Co., Ill., 107, 167, 184, 185, 254, 338, 344, 443, 448, 467, 593, 596, 597, 618, 621, 623, 625, 629, 631
Logan Co., Ohio, 184, 186, 552
Lycoming Co., Pa., 604

M

Mackinaw Dells, New Amish, 102, 215
Mackinaw River, Ill., 76, 79, 80, 87, 88, 91, 203, 437, 443, 597
Mackinaw (Roanoke), 187, 191, 203, 204, 205, 210, 212, 335, 438, 440
Malaysia, 20
Manitoba, 20, 49. 54, 56
Manson, Iowa, 191
Marion, Ind., 345, 354
Marion, Ohio, 173
Marion, South Dakota, 347
Maryland, 19, 183
Masontown, Penna., 264, 265
McPherson Co., Kans., 639
McPherson Co., Kans., 239
McLean Co., Ill., 78, 80, 87, 184, 244, 437, 443, 445, 459, 466, 471, 475, 593, 595, 596, 598, 617, 633
Meadows, Cent. Conf., 246, 355, 379, 413, 414, 419, 452, 467-469, 473, 480, 486, 487, 488, 493, 499, 501, 507, 513, 516, 526, 533
Meadows, Ill., 341, 351, 354, 355, 361, 379, 380, 400, 412, 419, 452, 468, 473, 501, 504, 511, 513, 516, 533
Medina Co., Ohio, 616
Mennonite Bible Mission, Chicago, Def. Menn., 589-590
Mennonite Gospel Mission, Chicago, Cent. Conf., 519-522
Mennonite Gospel Mission, Peoria, Cent. Conf., 522-524
Metamora, 129, 135, 137, 141, 191, 197, 198-202, 309, 326, 335
Metamora, Ill., 97, 105, 129, 191, 198, 199, 209, 282, 308, 320, 322, 326
Mexico, 20
Miami Co., Ohio, 142
Middlebury, Ind., 316, 474
Middlebury, Warren St. Cong., Cent. Conf., 487
Mifflin Co., Pa., 82, 105, 182, 186, 610, 633
Milford, Nebr., 327, 359, 360
Milford, Nebr., 191
Milford, Nebr., Def. Menn., 359, 373
Milford Square, Pa., 580
Mississippi River, 199, 223, 357
Missouri, 19, 230, 311, 460, 557
Montgomery Co., Pa., 616
Moravia, 7, 16, 32
Morrison, 107, 114, 132, 147, 158, 162-166, 168, 325
Morrison, Ill., 162
Morton, Ill., 359
Morton, New Amish, 102

Moultrie Co., Ill., 106, 336, 539 ff, 593
Mountain Lake, Minn., 588
Mt. Hermon Church, Shelbyville, Slp. Prch. Grp., 558-559
Mt. Morris, Ill., 29
Münster, Germany, 9

N

Nampa, Idaho, 473, 479, 493
Nappanee, Ind., 235
Nappanee, Ind., 450
Nebraska, 19, 20, 56, 154, 229, 311
Netherlands, 15, 21, 23, 24
New Orleans, 199, 223
New York City, 18
Normal, Cent. Conf., 470, 478-480, 487, 493, 501, 506, 507, 510
Normal, Ill., 478, 492, 501, 506
North Danvers, Cent. Conf., 188, 335, 385, 403, 453, 455-458, 460, 462, 469, 470, 471, 472, 476, 483, 485, 486, 487, 488, 491, 492, 493, 499, 502, 507, 518, 519, 526
North Manchester, Ind., 29

O

Ohio, 36, 37, 86, 96, 101, 174, 183, 203, 211
Ohio River, 199, 357
Ohio Station, Ill., 192, 227, 228, 236
Oklahoma, 56
Old Chicago, 108, 176-177, 270
Olive (Ind.), 271
Ontario, 19, 273
Orrville, Ohio, 308, 317, 318

P

Palatinate, 77, 78, 598, 626, 636, 637
Palestine, 3
Pandora, Ohio, 433
Panola, Ill., 351
Paraguay, 20
Partridge Creek, Ill., 76, 79, 88, 89, 90, 91, 198, 208, 357, 437
Partridge (Spring Bay), 79, 102, 105, 108, 187, 191, 198, 199, 200, 202, 231, 237, 335, 336, 357, 437, 438, 452, 463, 464
Pasadena, Calif., 434
Pekin, 227, 359, 453, 473
Pekin, (Bethel Cong.), Cent. Conf., 453, 473-474, 486, 487, 488, 493, 499, 507
Pemberville, Ohio, Def. Menn., 339
Peoria, Cent. Conf., 507
Peoria Co., Ill., 593
Peoria, Ill., 34, 88, 89, 90, 134, 135, 171, 199, 203, 240, 310, 334, 336, 375, 434, 440, 443, 445, 522, 523
Peoria Mission, 308, 309-314, 326
Peoria (New Amish), 102
Pennsylvania, 18, 19, 26, 28, 29, 34, 43, 45, 46, 50, 61, 77, 82, 151, 167, 174, 183, 199, 206, 211, 260, 270
Philadelphia, Pa., 370
Philadelphia, Pa., Gen. Conf., 583, 585
Pioneer, Ohio, 384
Pioneer, Ohio, Def. Menn., 339, 354, 367, 384
Plainview, Tex., 173
Pleasant Hill, Ill., 314
Pleasant Hill Rural Mission, 314-316
Plevna, Kans., Def. Menn., 367
Poland, 21
Polk City, Iowa, Gen. Conf., 582
Pompeii, Mich., 473, 513
Princeton, Ill., 463
Princeville (New Amish), 102
Providence, Ill., 226, 228
Prussia, 16
Pryor, Okla., 239
Pulaski, Iowa, 479
Putnam Co., 187, 335
Putnam Co., Ill., 80, 191, 222, 438

R

Reno Co., Kans., 551
Richland Co., Ohio, 93, 134, 600
Roanoke, 141, 190, 191, 197, 199, 202, 203-210, 211, 212, 213, 239, 309, 311, 320, 335, 438
Roanoke, Ill., 203, 205, 558, 559
Roanoke (New Amish), 102
Rock Creek, Ill., 76, 80, 87, 89, 91
Rock Creek (Yoder Church), 81, 82, 104, 105, 108, 183, 187, 203, 204, 211, 335, 437-444, 446, 455, 457, 459, 493, 562
Rockingham Co., Va., 601, 608

Roman Empire, 3
Russia, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 32, 33, 53, 55, 56, 133, 171, 176

S

Salem, Ohio, Gen. Conf., 585
Salem (Flanagan), Def. Menn., 187, 246, 339, 340, 342-356, 363, 364, 367, 375, 376, 377, 378, 398, 431, 433
Salem Gospel Mission, Chicago, Def. Menn., 341, 370, 371, 420-425
Salem Orphanage, Def. Menn., 393-401
Sangamon River, Ill., 253
Sanitarium and Training School, Mennonite, Bloomington, 402-411
Saskatchewan, 20, 33, 56
Scales Mound, 94, 95
Schaffhausen, 7
Schleitheim, 7
Scottdale, Pa., 44
Seward Co., Nebr., Def. Menn., 339
Shelby Co. Colony, O. O. Amish, 550-551
Shelby Co., Ill., 205, 550, 593
Shelbyville, 191
Shelbyville, Ill., 191, 559, 560
Shipshewana, Ind., 551
Skippack, Pa., 260
Slabtown, Ill., 443
Sleeping Preacher Church, 96, 97, 105, 108, 187, 188, 205, 335, 437
Smithville, Ohio, 183, 317
Somerset Co., Pa., 106, 632
Souderton, Pa., 320
South America, 20, 44
South Dakota, 33
South Danvers, Cent. Conf., 459-462, 476, 486, 487, 488, 493, 513
South Nampa Idaho, Cent. Conf., 475, 487
South Washington, Cent. Conf., 480-482, 487, 488, 507
Spring Bay, Ill., 79, 198, 463
Springfield, Pa., Gen. Conf., 585
Stark Co., Ohio, 451
St. Clair Co., Ill., 574, 593
St. Joseph Co., Mich., 610
St. Louis, 216
Stephenson Co., Ill., 97, 142, 593
Sterling, Ill., 27, 107, 153, 260, 267, 268, 273, 295, 307, 329, 330, 561, 566
Sterling, Kans., Def. Menn., 339, 367
Sterling (Science Ridge), 97, 107, 113, 114, 127, 130, 132, 147, 151-161, 162, 163, 165, 166, 267, 268, 306, 329, 330
Sterling, Ref. Menn., 133, 561-573
Streator, Ill., 342
Sugar Creek, Iowa, 190, 191
Sugar Creek, Ohio, 77, 551
Summerfield, Ill., Gen. Conf., 95, 96, 108, 133, 574-577, 583, 584, 585
Summerfield, Ill., 90, 91, 96, 575, 586
Switzerland, 6, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23, 32, 33, 34, 36, 76, 101, 102, 176, 467, 597, 633
Sycamore Grove, Mo., 188, 190, 191

T

Tazewell Co., Ill., 78, 80, 92, 100, 134, 184, 244, 338, 342, 466, 593, 597, 606, 607, 610, 614, 616, 618, 621, 623, 624, 627
Ten Mile Creek, 76, 80, 88, 89, 437
Tiskilwa, 191, 222, 224, 226, 228, 236, 295, 316, 330, 480, 598
Tiskilwa, Cent. Conf., 226, 480, 487, 513
Topeka, Ind., 453, 474, 513
Topeka, Ind., Cent. Conf., 453, 470, 474, 486, 487, 507
Topeka, Ind., Maple Grove, Cent. Conf., 487, 488
Toronto Mission, 282
Transylvania, 33
Tremont, Ill., 191, 196, 197, 216, 308, 329, 466
Tremont, Pleasant Grove, Dillon Creek, 127, 190, 191, 196, 197, 210, 216-221, 228, 237, 238, 239, 253, 309, 311, 329, 335, 336, 338, 464
Tremont, (New Amish), 102
Tuleta, Tex., 173
Turner Co., South Dakota, 119

Twenty-sixth St. Mission, 292-305, 524, 525

U

Union (Washington), see Washington (Union)

V

Vandalia, Ill., 551
Vineland, Ontario, 307
Virginia, 19, 50, 93, 167, 262, 265

W

Wadsworth, Ohio, 484, 576, 583, 584
Wadsworth, Ohio, Gen. Conf., 583, 585
Waldo (Flanagan), Gridley Prairie, 187, 190, 191, 197, 210, 239, 244-252, 330, 335, 336, 338
Wall Church, Mt. Lake, Minn., Def. Menn., 588
Washington, Cent. Conf., 425, 513
Washington Center, Pompeii, Mich., Cent. Conf., 474, 475, 487, 513
Washington (Union), 94, 108, 114, 127, 134-141, 147, 168, 169, 201, 202, 309, 311, 324
Washington, Ill., 201, 202, 204, 206, 221, 413, 462, 463, 469, 480, 504
Waterloo, Can., Gen. Conf., 583, 584
Wayland, Iowa, 308, 476
Wayne Co., Ohio, 101, 182, 183, 186
Weatherford, Oklahoma, 551
Wesley City, 81, 187, 335, 336, 338, 357, 358, 438
Wesley City, Ill., 78, 79, 88, 91
West Liberty, Ohio, 308, 317
Weston, Cent. Conf., 466, 467, 468
West Point, Iowa, Gen. Conf., 581, 582, 583, 585
West Point, Iowa, 576, 581, 582, 586
West Swamp, Pa., Gen. Conf., 583, 585
West Union, Cent. Conf., 471
West Union, Wellman, Iowa, 171
Weston, Ill., 468
Whiteside Co., Ill., 151, 162, 564, 593, 602, 615
Wichita, Kans., 20
Willow Springs, Tiskilwa, 80, 82, 158, 190, 191, 197, 222, 236, 330, 335, 480
Witmarsum, Holland, 11
Wittenberg, Germany, 4
Woodburn, Ind., 345, 354
Woodburn, Ind., Def. Menn., 339, 354, 367, 375
Woodford Co., Ill., 79, 86, 101, 107, 167, 184, 208, 212, 222, 228, 244, 342, 437, 438, 443, 593, 596, 600, 604, 607, 618
Wright Co. Nebr., 239
Württemberg, Germany, 597, 625

Y

Yellow Creek, (Indiana), 113, 260, 280, 317
Yoder Church (see Rock Creek)

Z

Zion City, Ill., 30, 60
Zion, Iowa, Gen. Conf., 582, 583, 585
Zion, Bluffton, Ohio, 273
Zurich, Ont., Can., Def. Menn., 339
Zurich, Switzerland, 4, 5

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Italics type indicates titles of books or periodicals.

A

- Adventists, Seventh Day, 30
- Africa Missions, 341, 369, 370, 377-392, 526
- Aid Association, Brotherhood, 341, 373, 401, 426-430, 527
- Aid Plan, Mennonite, 117, 193
- All-Mennonite Convention, 484, 514, 534-536
- Amish
  - Conservative Amish, 552
  - General Conferences, 39, 179ff, 188, 242, 439, 449, 454
  - Immigration to U. S. A., 19, 34
  - New Amish, see New Amish
  - Old Order, 34, 188, 539ff
  - Origin, 33
  - Relation to Mennonites, 33, 131f
- Amish Mennonites, Origin of, 39f
- Amish Mennonites, Conservative, 40f, 552
- Amusements, Worldly, 367
- Anabaptists
  - History, 4ff
  - Principles, 7ff, 12ff
- Apostolic, Christian, see New Amish
- Argentine Mission, see Missions
- Avoidance, see Shunning
- *Ausbund,* 180, 183

B

- Ban, 8, 13, 47, 103, 183, 545, 560, 565
- Baptism, 7, 27, 50, 55, 182, 183 219, 341, 348, 369, 566
- *Beams of Light,* 138, 170
- Bethany Bible School, 289, 300
- Bible Conferences 130, 147, 193, 236, 258, 486
- Bible Normal, 147, 149, 258, 511
- *Bible School Hymns,* 139
- Bible Study Classes, 145, 157, 164, 208, 256
- Bishop, Office of, 42, 43, 100, 113, 115, 136, 180, 206, 231
- Bishop, First Amish in Ill., 79
- Bluffton College, 353, 363, 374, 529
- Board of Education, 124, 549
- Board of Guardians, Mennonite, 270, 576
- Board of Missions and Charities, see Mission Boards
- Book and Tract Society, 276
- Brethren, the Church of the, see Dunkards
- Brighton Mission Chapel, 374, 422, 588f
- Brüdergemeinde, 54f, 591

C

- Cemetery, 149, 153, 163, 168, 218, 225, 254, 344, 564
- Central Conference, 188, 202, 220, 226, 230, 243, 246, 374, 378, 394, 404, 408, 413, 423, 424, 427, Book IV
- Charitable Institutions, see
  - Home for the Aged, Eureka
  - Old People's Home, Meadows
  - Salem Orphanage
  - Sanitarium, Bloomington
- Chicago Home Mission, see Home Mission
- Chicago Mission of General Conference, 586-587
- Children, Teaching of, 181, 346, 396
- Children's Day, 172, 215
- Christian Endeavor Societies, 120, 156, 351, 444, 458, 462, 465, 477, 483, 484, 497, 502f, 521, 577
- *Christian Evangel,* 385, 406, 415, 504, 508, 527, 534
- Christian Missionary Alliance, 377, 380, 381
- *Christian Monitor,* 164
- Christian Workers' Band, 350, 362, 371
- Christian Workers' Conference, 505ff
- Christian Workers' Institute, 465, 506f
- *Christianity and War,* 110

Christlicher Bundesbote, 580
Christliches Volksblatt, 580
Church and Sunday School Hymnal, 140
Church Buildings, 65, 102, 104, 108, 144, 153, 163, 168, 176, 179, 180, 199, 204, 212, 216, 217, 224, 238, 246, 253, 282, 295, 344, 440, 460, 463, 467, 468, 470, 472, 474, 477, 478, 480, 564, 575
Church Manual, 372, 419
Church of God in Christ, 49f
Clothing, Regulations and Customs regarding, 34, 37, 39, 45, 60, 64, 99, 101, 132, 180, 181, 184, 189, 196, 227, 228, 229, 330, 337, 340, 352, 490, 543, 565, 572
Coffman, John S., 266
Communion Services, (Lord's Supper), 8, 13, 35, 122, 123, 141, 172, 192, 215, 242, 350, 360, 434, 450, 490, 566
Communism, Hutterite, 32
Conferences, see All-Mennonite, Bible, Christian Workers' General, Pacifist Churches, Sunday School, Young People's
Confession of Faith, 419, 489
Congo Inland Mission, 341, 380ff, 390, 420
Conscientious Objectors, 252, 534, 549
Coöperative Activities, 133, 305, 325, 423, 425, 526-537, 590
Creek Settlements, 76, 437
Customs
  Clothing, see Clothing, Regulations
  Courtship, 545
  Early Illinois Mennonite, 441
  Old Order Amish, 34, 179, 188, 542ff
  Pioneer, 98ff, 109, 142, 217, 244

D

Daily Pantagraph, 447
Daily Vacation Bible School, 512
Defenseless Mennonites, Book III, 36f, 133, 187, 220, 246, 434, 516, 590
Defenseless Mennonite Brethren, 56f, 119, 341, 374, 375, 394, 422, 423, 588-590
Devotional Covering, 45, 99, 181, 229, 340, 367, 543
Discipline, 65, 123, 192, 201, 543, 545
Divisions, Causes for, 47, 50, 61f
Divorce, 118, also see Marriage
Doctrines, Mennonite, 59ff, 488
Dortrecht (Dort) Confession, 15, 39, 63, 64, 179, 489
Dowieism, 60, 220, also see Zion City
Drinking, 51, 123, 124, 553
Dunkards (Brethren), 26ff

E

Earliest Settlers, 595-598
Education, Attitude toward, 54, 63, 181, 193, 215, 251, 257, 330, 352, 363, 374, 528-534, 547, 584
Education, Early, in Ill., 109, 444
Eighteen Articles, see Dortrecht Confession
Eine Begebenheit, 453
Elder, Office of, 42, 43, 52
Elkhart Institute, 268, 529, also see Goshen College
Enchiridion, 10
Evangelism, 137, 263, 264ff, 325, 458
Evangelisationsbote, 590
Evangelische Botschafter, Der, 260
Evangeliumslieder, 349
Evangelizing Committee, 192, 271
Evangelizing Fund, 271
Evangelizing and Benevolent Board, 122, 123, 271, 276, 279
Excommunication, see Ban

F

Farming in Illinois, 70, 99, 547ff
Feet Washing, 39, 51, 54, 55, 60, 101, 103, 122, 141, 172, 353, 360, 365, 390, 434, 563
Foreign Missions, 377-392, 512
  African, 377-392
  Boards, 193
  India, 200, 249, 251, 271, 300
  South America, 125, 251, 288
Ft. Wayne Bible Training School, 353, 374, 433
Funerals, 103, 231, 549
Funkites, 45f

G

Garden St. Mission, Peoria, 309-314
Garrett Biblical Institute, 480, 511
General Conference, 42, 118, 122, 125, 192, 193, 323, 325, 330, 372, 582
General Conference Mennonites, 47f, 95, 97, 133, 423, 424, 450, 526, 574-587
Geography of Illinois, 67ff
German Language, 100, 102, 108, 117, 137, 139, 146, 207, 213, 214, 233, 248, 254, 299, 346, 442, 444, 447, 461, 464f, 471, 481, 498, 532, 547, 592
Glaubenslieder, 417
Good Tidings, 374, 383, 386, 418, 567
Goshen College, 124, 125, 160, 161, 215, 251, 257, 268, 315, 330, 353, 529, 602
Gospel Banner, 419
Gospel Herald, 140
Gospel Hymns, 140, 349

H

Happy Hour Mission 305, 374, 423, 527, 589
Harvest Meeting, 172
Heilsbote, 369, 372, 395, 417
Herald of Truth, 110, 140, 175, 176, 185, 259, 261, 262, 265, 324, 447, 450, 553, 601, 606
Herold der Wahrheit, 41, 261
Hesston College, 282
High Schools, 193, 215, also see Education, Attitude toward
Holdeman Mennonites, 49f
Holiness Movement, 356
Holy Kiss, 367, 563
Home Chapel, 508, 519ff
Home for the Aged at Eureka, 235, 319-322
Home Life, 181, 543f
Home Mission, Chicago, 114, 121, 123, 140, 141, 161, 194, 270, 275-291, 302-305, 316, 318, 322, 325, 331
Home Missions, 123, 516-525
Hospitals, 402-410
Hospital Society, 404
Hutterites, 32f
Hymnbooks, 117, 139, 180, 349, 363, 417

I

Illinois
  Farming in, 70, 99
  Geography of, 69ff
  History of, 71ff
Immigration to America, 18ff
India Missions, see Missions
Instruction Classes 218, 236, 248
Insurance, Life, 64, 192, 288, 367
  Property, 194, 367, 549

J

Jewish Work, 373, 424
Jubeltoene, 349

K

King's Business, 250
Kleine Gemeinde, 53f, 590
Krimmer Brüder, 55f, 133, 423, 590-592

L

Labor Unions, disapproved, 123
Ladies' Aid, 458, 462, 465, 477, 482, 504
Lay Membership in Conference, 115, 328
Life Insurance, 64, 192, 288
Life Songs, 140
Lightning Rods, 184, 194
Literary Societies, 158, 172, 250, 316, 329, 458
  Church, 259ff, 263
Literature, 417
Lord's Supper, see Communion
Love, 64

M

Manitobans, 56
Manual of Bible Doctrines, 122
Marion College, 353
Marriage, Attitude on, 64, 181, 250, 348, 365
Marriage, Intermarriage, 132
Martyrs' Mirror, 22, 544, 568, 606
Meetinghouses, see Church Buildings

Penn, William, 18, 24
Peters, Isaac, 56, 58, 119
Pfile, William, 145
Philips, Dirk, 10
Philips, Obbe, 10
Pitsche, Abraham, 182
Plank, David E., 617
Plank, D. J., 541
Plank, Jacob, 550
Plassman, 577
Pletcher, 574
Pletcher, Jacob, 90
Plockhoy, Cornelius, 18
Probst, L. S., 379

Q

Quinter, 295

R

Rabe, Henry, 395
Raber, 343
Ramseyer, 58
Ramseyer, Joseph, 363
Ramseyer, J. E., 431, 433
Ramseyer, Michael, 361, 470
Ramseyer, M. I., 485
Ramseyer, Nancy, 302
Ramseyer, Pearl, 522
Raynor, Jesse, 379, 382
Reber, Anna, 302
Reber, Joseph, 559, 560
Rebholz, Michael, 485
Rediger, 80, 246, 438
Rediger, Benjamin E., 345, 347, 349, 351, 354, 414, 415
Rediger, Benjamin Jr., 90
Rediger, Christian, 345, 354, 453, 466, 467, 474, 486
Rediger, E. A., 308, 618
Rediger, E. W., 488
Rediger, Jacob, 342, 343, 344
Rediger, John, 342, 345
Rediger, Joseph, 89, 91, 190, 203, 205, 338, 342, 343, 344, 345, 359, 363, 365, 369, 377, 417, 628
Rediger, J. C., 370
Rediger, Mary, 370, 421
Rediger, Peter, 89
Reeser, 438
Reeser, Christian, 77
Reiff, Christian, 158
Reimer, Klaas, 53, 58
Reinhart, 564
Reisner, John, 154, 160
Reisner, Mrs. John, 157
Reisser, Christian, 218
Reisser, C. B., 205, 206
Reist, H. F., 290, 293
Reitzel, Jacob, 153
Reitzel, Mrs. Jacob, 154
Reitzel, Mattie 155
Reitzel, Sarah (Nice), 155
Reuber, John, 597
Reublin, William, 5
Rhea, W. C., 587
Rhodes, Samuel, 161
Rich, 597
Rich, Christian, 597
Rich, Joseph, 413
Rickert, Emma, 388
Ringenberg, Jacob, 229
Ringenberg, John, 234
Ringenberg, Mary, 226
Ringenberg, Otto, 234
Ringenberger, 343
Ringenberger, Christian, 236
Risser, 462
Risser, Christ, 184, 203, 205, 212, 213
Risser, Christian, 597
Risser, Emma (King), 313
Risser, Jacob, 584
Risser, John, 203
Rittale, Frank, 434
Rittenhouse, William, 18
Robbins, 286, 290
Rocke, 223, 343
Rocke, Ben, 234
Rocke, Emanuel, 339, 359, 361
Rocke, Jacob, 468
Rodgers, 132
Roggy, Christian, 78, 88, 357, 595
Roggy, Peter, 86, 89
Ropp, 79, 80, 216, 438
Ropp, A. K., 475
Ropp, Alvin, 168, 171
Ropp, Andrew (not the bishop), 217
Ropp, Bishop Andrew, 80, 81, 85, 86, 87, 88, 217, 218, 220, 227, 228, 618
Ropp, Christian, 81, 83, 88, 204, 205, 209, 212, 438, 446, 449, 597
Ropp, Ithiel, 474
Ropp, I. W., 217
Ropp, Jacob, 86
Ropp, John, 470, 479, 517, 530, 531, 597
Ropp, Joseph, 88, 217, 220
Ropp, Moses D., 359, 360
Ropp, Nicholas, 185
Ropp, Peter, 89, 218, 220, 470
Roszhart, Aaron, 469
Roth, 343
Roth, Andrew, 90, 359, 360, 393
Roth, Barbara, 421
Roth, Benjamin, 345, 362
Roth, Clara, 362
Roth, Daniel, 90, 184, 217, 219, 225, 345
Roth, John, 306, 308, 309, 310, 314, 315
Roth, Moses, 362, 372, 373, 413, 426
Roth, Nicholas, 90, 184, 338, 358
Roth, Peter, 184
Rowe, E. T., 487, 512, 522
Royer, I. W., 258, 282, 290, 294, 295, 296, 299, 302, 308, 311
Rupp, 438
Rupp, Andreas, 184
Rupp, Ben, 339, 367
Rupp, Benjamin, 354, 359, 369, 371, 394, 395, 398, 399, 400, 404, 409, 418
Rupp, Mrs. Benjamin, 394, 395
Rupp, Christian, 184
Rupp, Daniel, 365, 370
Rupp, E. E., 350, 367, 371, 418, 630
Rupp, John, 369, 466, 521
Rupp, Joseph K., 369
Rupp, Peter, 184
Rupp, Samuel, 339, 630
Rusche, Joseph, 79, 88, 357, 595
Ruth, 574

Rutt, A. B., 290, 508, 509, 510, 517, 519, 520, 521, 527, 531
Rutt, Mrs. Henry, 156
Rutt, Jacob, 153, 159
Rutt, John J., 161
Rutt, John W., 153, 160
Rutt, Samuel, 153
Rychner, H., 190

S

Saltzman, Christian, 236
Salzman, 343
Salzman, Andreas, 597
Salzman, Earl, 470, 487
Salzman, Joseph, 597
Sattler, Michael, 7
Sauder, Aaron, 372, 373, 418, 426, 428
Sauder, David, 339
Sauder, Jerry, 339
Schad, Jacob, 470
Schad, Joseph, 470
Schantz, 597
Schantz, Christian, 236
Schantz, Elizabeth, 313, 316
Schantz, Jacob, 491
Schantz, Jacob, 597
Schantz, Peter, 230, 403, 413, 446, 453, 456, 460, 469, 470, 471, 474, 476, 477, 478, 479, 481, 485, 486, 488, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 498, 500, 508, 513, 517, 519, 520, 521, 536
Schartner, Frederick, 119
Schertz, 78, 79, 80, 198, 211, 438
Schertz, Andrew, 89, 236
Schertz, August, 234
Schertz, B. J., 321
Schertz, Christ, 89, 184, 185, 199, 204, 207
Schertz, C. A., 207
Schertz, C. S., 206, 295, 618
Schertz, David, 78, 86, 88, 89, 203, 204, 205, 357, 595
Schertz, Ed, 138
Schertz, Ferdinand, 201
Schertz, Henry R., 138, 199, 200, 282, 291, 618
Schertz, John, 89
Schertz, Joseph, 88, 89, 359
Schertz, Joseph D. 199, 207
Schertz, J. W., 485
Schertz, Mrs. Lena, 207
Schertz, Magdalene, 87, 208
Schertz, Mrs. Martha Imhoff, 291
Schertz, Matilda, 139
Schertz, Mattie, 322
Schertz, Nicholas, 236
Schertz, Peter, 88, 89, 199, 471, 472
Schertz, Peter D., 206, 207, 619
Schertz, Peter R., 139
Schiffler, Albrecht, 136, 161
Schimmel, L. O., 584
Schlabach, D. G., 542
Schlagel, Rev., 409
Schlatter, J. J., 369
Schlegel, 597
Schlegel, Benjamin, 597
Schlegel, Christian, 88, 184
Schlegel, Joseph, 190
Schmallenberger, B. F., 362
Schmallenberger, Fanny, 362
Schmallenberger, Mary, 362
Schmidt, Christian, 596
Schmidt, Johann, 575, 577, 596
Schmidt, John P., 184
Schmucker, Henry, 400
Schmucker, Mrs. Henry, 400
Schmucker, Jacob, 370, 373, 630
Schmucker, J., 190, 339, 367
Schmucker, N. J., 339
Schneider, D., 584
Schneider, Marie, 378
Schnur, Peter, 361
Schoenbeck, 78
Schoenbeck, Johann, 595
Schoenheit, 379
Schrock, 216, 343
Schrock, Abraham D., 541
Schrock, Adam, 559
Schrock, Andrew, 199
Schrock, Andrew A., 619
Schrock, A. A., 191, 328, 329
Schrock, Benjamin, 475, 541
Schrock, Christian, 203, 205
Schrock, Daniel, 541
Schrock, Jeff, 551
Schrock, John, 230
Schrock, Jonathan, 183
Schrock, J. B., 480
Schrock, Joseph, 473
Schrock, Joseph D., 541
Schrock, Joseph L., 542
Schrock, N. B., 542
Schrock, Samuel, 551
Schrock, Tobias, 550
Schroeder, 296
Schultz, D. G., 347
Schultz, George, 290
Schultz, G. P., 347, 374, 396, 418, 419, 423, 589, 590
Schweitzer, John, 86, 88
Schwenck, Christian, 565
Schwenck, William, 565
Sears, Christian, 232
Sears, Emery, 234
Seeman, 284
Seidensticker, Oswald, 25
Shank, Mrs. Crissie Y., 317
Shank, J. W., 296, 299, 302
Shank, Molly (Kauffman), 290
Shank, Ollie (Grabill), 302
Shantz, 167
Shantz, Barbara, 290
Shantz, Christian, 175
Shantz, John, 171, 172
Sharp, 438, 473
Sharp, Eli, 458, 502
Sharp, John, 91, 597
Sharp, Jonathan, 91
Sharp, Peter, 91
Shaum, Henry, 169
Shearer, Samuel, 171
Shellenberger, E. M., 144, 148, 154
Shellenberger, Joseph, 142
Shelley, A. S., 530
Shelley, W. S., 484, 487
Shelly, 175
Shelly, Addison, 164
Shelly, A. D., 584
Shelly, Henry, 174
Shelly, H. L., 120
Shenk, P. J., 328

Shetler, 223
Shetler, S. G., 156, 328
Shoemaker, Benjamin, 142
Shoemaker, C. C., 145
Shoemaker, E. B., 145
Shoemaker, J. S., 114, 115, 122, 123, 124, 126, 128, 136, 144, 146, 149, 156, 168, 169, 170, 173, 248, 281, 294, 295, 311, 320, 325, 328, 329, 332, 620
Short, Sarah, 400
Showalter, 175
Showalter, Christian, 584
Shultz, 564
Shupe, Bertram, 290
Sieberns, H. E., 596
Simons, Menno, 10, 11, 14, 23, 562, 569
Slagel, 80, 173
Slagel, A., 218
Slagel, A. W., 287
Slagel, Arthur, 252, 291
Slagel, Christian, 246, 248
Slagel, Daniel W., 169, 621
Slagel, John, 328
Slagel, Roy, 252
Slagle, Aaron, 339
Slagle, B. K., 345, 393
Slagle, Christian, 342, 343
Slagle, Emanuel M., 339, 349, 354, 367, 371, 372, 374, 631
Slagle, Emma, 421
Slagle, John, 345, 354, 369, 393
Sloan, Dr. Edwin P., 406
Smissen, C. H. A. van der, 577
Smith, 343
Smith, Christian, 79, 88
Smith, C. Henry, 287, 290
Smith, Henry, 128
Smith, Jacob, 136
Smith, James, 204
Smith, Rev. James, 73
Smith, J. B., 290
Smith, Joel, 540
Smith, John, 119, 190, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 219, 239, 253, 343
Smith, Joseph, 73
Smith, Joseph D., 200, 319, 320, 321, 322
Smith, J. J., 309
Smith, J. P., 190, 246
Smith, Lydia, 171, 256, 318, 319
Smucker, Alma, 331
Smucker, Alvin, 234
Smucker, Frank I., 233, 234, 235, 308
Smucker, Mrs. Frank, 234
Smucker, John, 234
Smucker, Jonathan, 273
Smucker, Ralph, 331
Smucker, Ruth (Magnuson), 315, 319
Snavely, 152
Snavely, Christian, 144, 148
Snavely, Elias, 154, 159
Snavely, Henry, 142
Snavely, Jacob, 107, 152, 153, 154
Snyder, Christian, 142, 146, 148
Snyder, John, 136, 169, 175
Snyder, Peter B., 168, 171
Soldner, G. T., 577
Solin, Frank B., 424
Sommer, 77, 211, 597
Sommer, Emil A., 382
Sommer, Mrs. Emil A., 382
Sommer, George, 199, 200
Sommer, I. A., 535
Sommer, Jacob, 487, 521, 522, 523
Sommer, Kate (Troyer), 298, 302
Sommer, Lizzie, 302
Sommer, Peter, 199, 466, 597
Sommers, John, 474
Sommers, Joseph, 358
Somney, Jacob, 347
Speicher, Matilda, 302, 313, 322
Spies, Adam B., 565
Springer, 80, 96, 198, 438, 459, 619
Springer, Benjamin, 239, 308, 314
Springer, David, 91
Springer, Edward, 234
Springer, Joseph, 238, 239, 359
Springer, J. W., 240
Sprunger, Agnes, 382, 389
Sprunger, John A., 347, 377, 402, 420
Stahley, Martin, 485
Stahley, Stephen, 452, 467, 469, 486, 491
Stahly, John, 456, 485, 486
Staker, Daniel, 361
Stalter, 322, 343
Stalter, Daniel, 412
Stalter, John, 597
Stalter, Joseph, 456, 492
Stauffer, 154, 354
Stauffer, Benjamin, 107, 152, 153
Stauffer, Henry, 234
Stauffer, Jacob, 48, 58
Stauffer, Jake, 234
Stauffer, John, 234
Stauffer, Lena, 290
Stauffer, Omar, 234
Stehli, Johannes, 184
Steiger, George, 35
Steiner, Adam, 163
Steiner, Mrs. Clara E., 317, 319
Steiner, M. S., 265, 266, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 289, 378, 526, 622
Steiner, Vernon, 158
Steinman, 343
Stemen, Henry, 260, 264
Stemma, 284
Stevenson, Alvin E., 354, 371
Stevenson, A. J., 380, 381, 382
Stevenson, Mrs. 480
Stoltzfus, Nicholas, 77
Stork, 284
Stormer, Charles, 253
Streid, 438
Streid, Elizabeth, 477, 503, 520, 521
Strock, Homer, 138
Strubhar, 77, 438
Strubhar, Christian, 89
Strubhar, John, 78, 86, 184, 440, 441, 442, 456, 486, 492, 595
Strubhar, Jonathan, 498
Strubhar, Lyle, 504
Strubhar, Peter, 89, 462, 463
Strubhar, Valentine, 89, 206, 446, 464, 472, 474, 480, 486, 487, 501, 516, 520, 534, 535
Strupphar, Johann, 595
Stuckey, Peter, 77, 445, 452
Stucky, 343, 438
Stucky, C. N., 339
Stucky, C. R., 446
Stucky, Joe, 360

Stucky, Joseph, 38, 58, 82, 91, 184, 186, 187, 188, 202, 228, 246, 440, 441, 442, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 453, 454, 456, 457, 458, 463, 464, 466, 467, 469, 471, 474, 481, 482, 485, 486, 488, 490, 491, 492, 493, 498, 518, 519, 526, 536
Stucky Nicholas B., 345, 347, 367, 393
Stucky, Peter E., 462, 463, 464, 499
Stucky, Sam, 403
Stucky, S. M., 485
Stutzman, 77, 438
Stutzman, Daniel, 551
Stutzman, Fannie (Hershberger), 302
Stutzman, Joash, 456, 486, 492
Stutzman, John W., 542
Stutzman, Lydia B. (Miller), 290
Summer, 80, 198
Summer, George, 88
Summer, John J., 138
Summer, Joseph, 79, 88
Summer, Mrs. J. B., 139
Summers, J. J., 307, 308, 309
Sutter, Christian, 238
Sutton, Mrs. Omar L., 383, 384, 388
Swartz, Michael, 85
Swartzentruber, 438
Sweet, 284
Sweitzer, 80
Sweitzer, John, 79, 358, 462
Sywulka, Emil, 378

T

Thiessen, H. C., 433
Thiessen, Mary, 591
Thiessen, Susie, 591
Thut, Alice (Page), 277, 284, 287, 289
Thut, Dr. B. F., 287, 290
Thut, John, 290
Tinsman, 175
Tischer, John, 203
Troyer, 77, 82
Troyer, Amos, 196
Troyer, A. P., 328
Troyer, David A., 542
Troyer, Emanuel, 403, 404, 405, 413, 470, 480, 485, 486, 487, 488, 493, 495, 500, 501, 506, 512, 513, 531, 533, 535
Troyer, Mrs. Emanuel, 505
Troyer, George D., 302
Troyer, Hiram, 471, 472
Troyer, John, 551
Troyer, Jonas, 91, 596
Troyer, Levi, 551
Troyer, Manassas, 470, 485
Troyer, Noah, 551
Troyer, Samuel, 551
Tschantz, Daniel, 450
Tschetter, Rev. Joseph W., 591, 592
Tschetter, Mrs. Joseph W., 591

U

Ulrich, 343, 597
Ulrich, Andrew, 212
Ulrich, David, 206, 207
Ulrich, Emanuel, 467, 487
Ulrich, Joseph, 345, 393
Ulrich, Ludwig, 597
Ulrich, Peter, 89, 204, 597
Ulrich, Viola, 310
Ummel, Abraham, 470
Unsicker, Jacob, 89, 184
Unzicker, Daniel, 86
Unzicker, Jacob, 464
Unzicker, John, 462
Unzicker, Kate, 230
Unzicker, Peter, 168
Unzicker, Roy, 472
Unzicker, William, 239

V

Valentine, 388
Van Dyke, Dr. G. H., 285, 290
Vercler, 343
Vercler, Andrew, 403, 413, 453, 468, 469, 472, 474, 485, 486, 487, 509, 513, 518
Verkler, 101, 596
Verkler, John, 101
Verkler, Joseph, 101, 198
Virkler, Joe, 79, 88
Virkler, John, 79, 88, 198
Voelcher, 284

W

Wagler, 343
Wagler, Christian, 360
Wagler, Gideon, 360
Wagler, Harry, 362
Wagler, Jacob, 184
Wagler, Peter, 360
Wagner, Christian, 206
Wagner, Joseph, 205, 206, 207
Waldo, Peter, 568
Wall, Aaron, 57, 119
Warkentin, Bernhard, 20
Warye, J. H., 300, 302
Warye, Mrs. J. H., 300, 302
Watson, 564
Weaver, John, 136, 564, 565
Weaver, J. M. R., 170
Weaver, William B., 307, 457, 483, 487, 510, 512, 529
Weber, H. F., 374
Weber, John F., 155, 157
Weckesser, John, 565
Weilder, Fred, 234
Wenger, A. D., 289
Wenger, Chester, 171
Werner, David, 471
Weyeneth, Benedict, 101, 103
Whitmer, Paul E., 290, 295
Whitmore, 175
Whitmore, Dr., 285, 290
Wiebe, Jacob, 56, 58
Wiens, A. F., 294, 302, 587, 589
Wiens, Mrs. A. F., 587, 589
Wirkler, Jacobine, 86
Wisler, Jacob, 50, 51, 58, 61
Wittmer, 574
Witmer, Amos, 426, 427
Wolber, Jacob, 212
Wortz, 343
Wuest, 58
Wurst, George, 597

Y

Yeackley, Phoebe, 302
Yoder, 77, 82, 211, 438, 459

Membership Qualification, 255
Mennonite Bible Mission, 589f
Mennonite Gospel Mission, Chicago, 519-522
Mennonite Gospel Mission, Peoria, 522-524
Mennonite, The, 535
Mennonitischer Friedensbote, 580
Menno Simons' Works, 544, 606
Mennonite Brethren in Christ, 50ff, 372, 374, 427
Mennonite Brethren Church, 54f
Men's Missionary Meeting 307
Mergers, 195, 196, 324ff
Military Service, 17, 33, 110, 126, 141, 158, 198, 208, 243, 252, 355, 363, 372
Millennialism, 51
Ministerial Association of the Central Conference, 498, 511
Missionary Worker, 433
Missions
  Boards, 125, 146, 193, 271, 274, 281, 293, 294, 301, 306ff, 309, 311, 317, 321, 375, 378, 379, 492, 517f
  Foreign, see Foreign Missions
  Home, see Home Missions
  Influence of, 303f
  Rural, 270, 314
  Support of, 121, 146, 193, 251, 255, 257, 272, 300, 350, 458
Mission Study Classes Encouraged, 125, 129, 156
Missionary Church Association, 38, 341, 356, 363, 369, 431-434, 593
Modernism, 60, 196
Moody Bible Institute, 289, 293, 353, 363, 374, 528, 591
Mormons, 73
Musical Instruments, 39, 65, 117, 184, 192, 194, 235, 250, 257, 363, 490

N

New Amish, 34ff, 101ff, 187, 202, 215, 220, 473, 593
New Birth, Menno on the, 12ff
Non-Resistance, 6, 13, 32, 63, 103, 109, 126, 252, 260, 355, 366
Nurses' Training School, 402-410

O

Oath, 6, 9, 32, 63, 182, 366
Office-holding, 6, 8, 35, 54, 62f, 116, 192, 366
Old Order Amish, 34, 188, 539ff
Old Order Mennonites, 50
Old People's Home at Meadows, 341, 364, 412-416, 497, 511, 593
Ordination, Methods of, 43, 122, 206, 231, 368
Orphanage, see Salem Orphanage

P

Pacific Garden Mission, 423
Pacifist Churches, Conference of, 29, 484f
Pathway of Praise, 140
Pensions condemned, 192
Pentecostal Hymns, 349, 363
Periodicals, see titles
Persecution, 6, 15, 33
Philharmonia, 417
Photographs discouraged, 117, 121, 184, 366
Pleasant Hill Rural Mission, 314-316
Prairie Settlements, 106, 440, 455
Prayer Head Covering, see Devotional Covering
Prayer Meeting, 123, 283, 311, 312, 347, 397
Preacher, Office of, 8, 113, 200, 231
Prohibition, 118
Proselyting, 29, 30, 104
Publication Board, 194, 509
Publication Work, 109, 133, 260, 364, 417-419, 508, 579f, 606

Q

Quakers, 24ff, 533, 543

R

Reformed Mennonites, 46f, 97, 133, 151, 561-572
Relief work, 165, 195, 243, 249, 252, 300, 374, 533, 534, 550
Religiöser Botschafter, 580
Retreat, Young People's, 536
Revivals, 137, 156, 170, 236, 248, 265ff, 292
River Brethren, 44f
Rural Missions, see Missions

S

Sacred Songs, 139
Salem Orphanage, 341, 374, 393-401, 497, 593
Salem Gospel Mission, 341, 370, 420-422
Sanitarium at Bloomington, 341, 402-410, 497, 511, 593
Schools
  Church, 346
  Early, 109
  German, 109, 248, 346, 481
Secret Orders, 64, 367
Separation from the World, 8, 64
Sewing Circles, 138, 147, 157, 164, 171, 201, 207, 214, 234, 242, 249, 256, 313, 316, 322, 351, 363
Shunning, 33, 47, 102f, 104, 132, 179, 183, 189, 545, 560, 565
Simplicity, 60, 64, 125, 543
Singing, 50, 102, 139, 180, 235, 257, 287, 349, 546
Singing Classes and Schools, 139, 250, 442
Sleeping Preacher Group, 41, 194, 205, 552-560
Smoking, 54, 552
Social Attitudes, 61ff
Staufferites, 48f
Sunday School
  Conferences, 126ff, 193, 194, 258, 268, 273, 275, 375-76, 399, 425, 590, 602, 622
  Early, 108, 138, 144, 154, 164, 170, 200, 207, 214, 220, 232, 240, 248, 255, 348, 360, 442, 457, 461, 498, 577, 579
  Field Worker, 128
  Lesson Helps, 170, 206, 233, 255, 268, 434, 499, 602, 621
  Libraries, 129, 146, 155, 171, 250, 352, 361, 376
  Mission S. S., 145, 155, 207, 307
  Normal, 125
  Organization, 120, 145, 155, 361, 499f
  Statistics (Central Conference), 501
  Teacher Training, 129, 171, 240, 361, 478
Sunday School Association, 500
Sunday School Times, 250

T

Tobacco, 51, 116, 368
Tabernacle Hymns, 349, 363
Tongues Movement, 356
Travel, Early Methods of, 74
Twenty-Sixth St. Mission (Chicago), 292-305, 512, 524f

U

United Brethren, 45, 57
Universalism, 448ff

W

Wadsworth School, 576, 584
Wahrheitsfreund, 591
War and its Evils, 109
Western District Conference of Gen. Conf., 585, 586
Wheaton College, 374
Wisler Mennonites, 50
Witmarsum Seminary, 353, 374, 477, 533
Woman's Missionary Society, 256, 316-319, 326, 577
Words of Cheer, 138, 170
World War, 165, 243, 252, 355, 363, 372, 534, 549

Y

Yearbook, 510
Youth's Christian Companion, 138, 170
Young People's Conference, 159
Young People's Institute, 351
Young People's Meeting, 125, 138, 146, 171, 192, 201, 209, 214, 234, 241, 249, 256, 259, 268, 287, 361ff, 458, 602
Young People's Paper, 276
Young People's Retreat, 536

Z

Zionsbote, 55
Zion's Call, 371, 373, 374, 395, 418, 419, 590
Zion City, 30, 60, 220
Zion's Tidings, 341, 362, 374, 387, 389, 415, 419, 590
Zur Heimath, 580

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
289.7W38C C001
CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES OF
3 0112 025279453